

Lower Island NEWS

An independent democratic socialist newspaper serving the Lower Vancouver Island area for 32 years

Now on the web at www.lowerislandnews.com

Volume 33 Issue #2

June 2016

Victoria, BC

“Recovering previous politician” holds audience spellbound

Jean Crowder, Member of Parliament for the Nanaimo-Cowichan riding from 2004 - 2015, spoke on May 1, International Workers Day, at the Tsawout Reserve, to members of the Saanich-Gulf Islands NDP. As a former NDP Aboriginal Affairs critic, Crowder outlined the legislative progress that has been made in the relationship between First Nations and the Canadian government, and about the challenges that remain. This event was sponsored by the Saanich-Gulf Islands Federal NDP Riding Association. Following is a summary of Crowder's presentation. -- Ed.

By Jean Crowder

I have been asked to speak about Indigenous peoples and economic development, derelict vessels and life after politics and I will begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on Tswaout territories.

And that today is May 1, an important date in workers' history. Many of you know the history but as a refresher, May 1 was chosen to be International Workers' Day in order to commemorate the 1886 Haymarket affair in Chicago. The police were trying to disperse a public assembly during a general strike for the eight-hour workday, when an unidentified person threw a bomb at the police. The police responded by firing on the workers, killing four demonstrators, according to information in Wikipedia.

And all these years later, workers still are at risk. April 28 was the day of mourning to honour all those workers who lost their lives in the work place in the past year. An article last week in the *Cowichan Citizen* summed it up best by saying if we truly want to honour those workers and their families, we must continue to work to ensure that work places are safe for all workers.

Which leads me to the primary reason I am speaking to you today -- Indigenous Peoples and the economy. These are complex matters so I will narrowly focus on a few key issues in the short time I have. And I am using the term Indigenous Peoples because we are talking about First Nations, Inuit and Metis.

I don't believe you can talk about the economy until you work on changing the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and our governments (at all levels). There are a number of factors to consider:

1. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This declaration is fundamental to any current and future relationship. The whole document is important but I want to mention three sections that I think are important to economic development (there are others as well).

In the preamble it states that the General Assembly (was) "convinced that the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples in this Declaration will enhance harmonious and cooperative relations between the State and indigenous peoples, based on principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, non-discriminations and good faith".

Article 3 says, "Indigenous people have



Photo by Devon Black

“Hi, I’m Jean, a recovering previous politician -- a PIP -- previously important person.” With this quip, former MP Jean Crowder (Nanaimo-Cowichan) welcomes her audience gathered at the Tswaout Reserve May 1 to learn more about legislative progress made in the relationship between First Nations and the Canadian government and the challenges that remain.

the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

And Article 19 states, “States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous people concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.”

If governments adopted the UNDRIP meaningfully, and used it as principles to guide their behaviour, it would go a long way to improving the relationships. The test will come on whether the government is serious about changing the relationship when the MP for Abitibi-Brie James-Nunavik Eeyou Romeo Saganash's bill on ensuring that the laws of Canada respect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples comes to a vote in the House of Commons.

2. There have been numerous key court decisions over the years which lay out a framework for the relationship between the federal government and indigenous peoples. Many of these court decision arose because of unresolved matters in BC (and the following is cribbed from the internet):

- Calder (1973) - this was a split decision but this case opened the door to negotiations between the government and First Nations to establish rights to land and resources.

- Sparrow (1990) - this was a test of the scope of section 35 (1) of the constitu-

tion which recognizes and affirms the “existing and treaty rights”. Here the court set out criteria for determining whether a right can be considered to be an “existing” right and whether the government is justified in curtailing such a right.

- Delgamuukw (1997) - Supreme Court made statements about aboriginal land title that were precedent setting for future land rights cases and the land claims process.

- Tsilhqot'in (2014) - Supreme Court charted a new course relative to future resource development and the process of consultation with Aboriginal groups in areas of Canada that have not been ceded by historic treaties, suggesting that the Crown in future must do more than fulfill a duty to consult: it must either obtain consent or meet legal requirements to justify infringing on Aboriginal rights.

- Daniels (2016) - the court found that Metis and non-status Indians are “Indians” as the term is used in section 91(24) of the Constitution Act.

These and many other court decision are critical for the future relationship and in particular, the last two decisions noted above require a fulsome and timely response from the federal government.

3. And why should we care? Well, here in BC there are a number of economic development projects that, in the spirit of the UNDRIP, should require free, prior and informed consent. These projects all have the potential to impact on the health of our environment, our social structures and of course the economy. And as an aside note,

adopting the principles of the UNDRIP would benefit all of society. We only have to look to what is happening in the Shawnigan Lake watershed where the residents, who are overwhelmingly opposed to the dumping that is happening there, are being disregarded.

These are just a few of the projects that surely should have that free, prior and informed consent:

- Site C dam
- LNG projects (here and up north)
- Northern Gateway
- Kinder Morgan

What we need is immediate action on the federal government's part to clarify the rules and the relationships both for itself, for industry and for all of our communities. Then we will understand what is in play.

4. There is another key decision that will impact on future relationships with Indigenous peoples and that is the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decisions of April 26, 2016. I think the Maclean's article of April 27, 2016 summed it up nicely in their headline:

“Trudeau government put on short leash by human rights tribunal”

In the ruling, at paragraph (32) the Tribunal stated:

“However, the Panel's order specifically indicated that INAC was to ‘immediately implement the full meaning and scope of Jordan's principle’ (the Decision at para. 481). While it understands a period of time may have been needed to meet with partners and stakeholders and put a framework in

Please turn to Jean Crowder, page 2

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #40008124

Return to:

Lower Island News

Box 311-2750 Quadra Street

Victoria, BC V8T 4E8

Inside this issue

Two views of the NDP convention.....3	Subsidizing private schools.....13
Editorial and op/ed4	1000 points of blight.....14
Letters.....5	5000 pairs of socks.....15
But can they govern?.....6	SeaWorld changes.....16
Schools-to-prisons pipeline.....7	An environmental assessment law..17
Federal news8 and 9	Poetry.....18
Provincial news.....10 and 11	Coming events calendar.....19
True democracy--a way to go.....12	Directory.....20

Jean Crowder, continued from page 1

place, the Panel did not foresee this order would take more than three months to implement. The order is to 'immediately implement', not immediately start discussions to review the definition in the long-term."

The Tribunal goes on to say that there is a workable definition of Jordan's principle, and essentially the government should get on with it.

Jordan's Principle, Motion 296, was adopted unanimously by the House of Commons in 2007. It stated that:

"In the opinion of the House the government should immediately adopt a child first principle based on Jordan's Principle, to resolve jurisdictional disputes involving the care of First Nations Children."

This seems pretty clear, but successive governments have either disregarded the will of the House or attempted to narrow the definition. (For more information see the website for First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada.) Jordan's principle has been used in court cases, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and by the Auditor General.

The recent INAC office occupations are a signal of rising discontent -- partly in response to youth suicides attempts and

partly the ongoing lack of change and responsiveness from governments. The time for meaningful action is now.

So what can you do -- one thing is to continue to hold the governments (both federal and provincial) to account "for their policies, actions, and laws that lead to the widespread social and economic challenges that First Nations people continue to face. Write letters, send emails, sign petitions, attend rallies and use your vote wisely" (from First Nations 101: Tons of Stuff You Need to Know About First Nations People by Lynda Gray).

6. In closing I want to touch briefly on derelict vessels. As many of you know, I had a bill before the House in the last parliament which was defeated (but the Liberals supported). Sheila Malcolmson (MP, Nanaimo-Ladysmith) has now put forward another bill (C219). Governments in the past have been "studying" the matter but of course what we need is action that will deal with the increasing problems of these derelict vessels.

Thanks to the organizers and all who attended, especially for the lively discussion that followed.

Editor's note: On May 10, a week after Crowder's presentation, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett addressed a plenary session on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: "We intend nothing less than to adopt and implement the declaration in accordance with the Canadian Constitution."

The declaration recognizes Indigenous Peoples' basic human rights, as well as rights to self-determination, language, equality and land, among others. Bennett, who received a standing ovation for her statement, was at the United Nations with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould.

Chief Wilton Littlechild, a Cree lawyer and former commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was also present. Littlechild has been involved with the UN for nearly 40 years and said he's rarely seen anyone receive a standing ovation.



Irene Wright, of Salt Spring Island (left) thanked Jean Crowder for her presentation. Asked how she was enjoying her retirement, Crowder said, "Life after politics? It's great! I'm taking yoga teacher training to take the edge off." Photo by Jack Greenwell

Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke New Democrats!

Notice of 2016 Annual General Meeting

Saturday, June 25,
at St. Peter and St. Paul's Church parish hall
1379 Esquimalt Road, Esquimalt (turn right from Admirals Road)

Registration 1:30 p.m., meeting 2-4 p.m.

Besides the election of the 2016-17 Executive, the meeting will include motions to amend the constitution and bylaws

Questions/information: esquimaltsaanichsookendp@gmail.com

BARBECUE! BARBECUE! BARBECUE!

ESQUIMALT-SAANICH-SOOKE NDP
INVITES YOU TO OUR ANNUAL
SUPPORTER APPRECIATION BARBECUE

SATURDAY, July 23, 2-5 p.m.
3837 DUKE ROAD, METCHOSIN

Admission by donation (SUGGESTED DONATION \$20)

Lively discussion followed Crowder's presentation

Alicia Holmes: What can we do to improve relationships?

One participant suggested: "Say Hello to First Nations where you see them...like in the grocery store."

Crowder: Intervene when seeing instances of bullying. Many celebrations and events are open to the public, such as pow wows -- they aren't part of cultural traditions in this territory but many bands hold them. Support public events that are organized by First Nations such as Idle No More rallies. Quiet presence will open doors ...

Forrest Nelson: What will be the effect of the Daniel's decision? Will Métis communities change? [Daniels decision (2016) -- the court found that Métis and non-status Indians are "Indians" as the term is used in section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act*.]

Crowder: The federal government is presently considering their response. Part of the challenge is in the definition of Métis -- the question is whether self-identifying will be enough.

Sue Stroud: When working with BC Housing, there were road blocks every day when trying to help First Nations, as anyone applying for help with housing has to prove federal citizenship and status cards don't show that. The Mohawk people don't even recognize Canadian citizenship.

Crowder: The government can't just do away with the *Indian Act* because it protects Aboriginal rights.

Heather Tufts: There are 633 different Aboriginal communities with differing views, capacities, and desires around the *Indian Act*.

Crowder: Yes, and self-governing agreements are no longer under the *Indian Act*. The *First Nations Land Management Act* (1999, modified in 2013) puts First Nations up against municipalities.

Carol Pickup: There are some positives. In Greater Victoria School District, the Board is budgeting more support for Craigflower Elementary where Songhees and Esquimalt reserve children go to school.

Crowder: The *BC First Nations Education Act* (2007) was driven by First Nations peoples and school boards have responded. The grad rates are improving.

Gary Holman: The Steelhead LNG project being proposed by the Malahat has opposition from bands on the Saanich Peninsula. The argument is about rights over the Saanich Inlet, and that there has been inadequate consultation.

Crowder: Chief Michael Harry started the proposal but Chief Caroline Harry elected six months ago is more committed to process.

Heather Tufts: First Nations bands are more against this project than non-First Nations -- it is egregious to the waters and is against the Douglas Treaty. There needs to be community involvement in considering this project proposed by the Malahat.

Crowder: There is no magic formula for economic development and work with First Nations...but there are great people out there who can help us to come together and work this out—John Borrows, Lynda Gray, John Ralston Saul, Thomas King, Taiaiake Alfred ... it's a challenge for many of us to be quiet and listen.

Jean Crowder's suggested readings:

John Borrows - *Canada's Indigenous Constitution and Drawing Out the Law*

Paul Tennant - *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*

Thomas Berger - *A Long and Terrible Shadow* (I say a must read)

John Ralston Saul - *The Comeback*

Harold Johnson - *Two Families: Treaties and Government* (this one is a short read and a good take on what treaties mean).

Taiaiake Alfred - check his website taiaiake.net

Lynda Gray - *First Nations 101*

Thomas King - *The Inconvenient Indian*

And for a good overview, the RCAP (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples) report is available on line.

NDP selects time frame for leadership vote

OTTAWA -- The Federal Council of the New Democratic Party of Canada met in Ottawa May 15 to make key decisions about the process for the NDP to elect its next leader.

Council has decided that the next leader will be elected between September 17, 2017 and October 31, 2017.

The nomination period will begin on July 2, 2016.

"Council has given potential candidates a time frame that will allow for a fair and competitive race, while giving enough time for the new Leader to prepare for the general election," said Party President Marit Stiles.

As set out in the party Constitution, the Leader will be elected by secret ballot. Every member is entitled to cast a ballot for the selection of the Leader. Candidates for the leadership with the fewest number of votes will drop off the ballot in subsequent rounds until one candidate receives 50%

plus one or more of the total votes cast in that round.

New Democrats from coast to coast to coast will be called on to make a very important decision for the future of their party. The process for replacing the Liberal government by a truly progressive, NDP government begins today.

In order to run, candidates will be required to provide a registration fee of \$30,000. The spending limit has been established at \$1.5 million. Administration fees of 25% will be levied on all monetary donations.

Other decisions regarding the rules of the race will be discussed by the Federal Council Executive Committee in the coming weeks, and announcements will be made accordingly.

In compliance with the *Elections Act*, notice will be given to Elections Canada to inform them about the start and end dates of the leadership contest.

Mulcair is out, change is in

By Barry Weisleder

The stunning defeat of Leader Tom Mulcair, and the launch of a cross-country discussion of the Leap Manifesto, signals a shift in the relationship of forces in Canada's New Democratic Party.

The right wing forces of the party and the union bureaucracy are now off-balance and on the defensive. The "progressive", soft-left is ascendant. Will the left seize this golden opportunity to fight for an anti-capitalist agenda and make North America's only mass, union-based political party a weapon in the fight against austerity and climate catastrophe?

As over 1,700 delegates gathered in Edmonton, Alberta for the April 8-10 NDP federal convention, two things were evident. Firstly, it was clear that Mulcair, who led the disastrous election campaign in which the party lost a million votes and 60 percent of its parliamentary seats last October, did not enjoy the confidence of a large majority. Secondly, anti-pipeline sentiment was pervasive, at least outside of the Alberta delegation, and the appetite for action against catastrophic climate change would prevail.

The conflict over carbon-based energy came to a head when Alberta NDP Premier Rachel Notley made a provocative gamble. She went on television the night before the convention to demand that a west-to-east pipeline be built, with the help of the federal government. That put Mulcair, who had been wavering, after initially supporting the pipeline East, in an impossible position. He continued to waver, and was mostly absent from the convention floor, thus sealing his fate.

Former Ontario NDP Leader and UN diplomat Stephen Lewis delivered the coup de grace with an electrifying speech on Saturday night. Lewis topped Notley by persuasively arguing that an extensive transition to green energy would be the greatest job creator on earth.

But few, outside of the NDP Socialist Caucus, predicted Mulcair's precipitous fall. When delegates voted 52 percent on Sunday morning in favour of launching a leadership race to replace the former Quebec Liberal cabinet minister, the convention and the country were stunned. Party honchos and bourgeois pundits forecasted that Mulcair would get over 70 percent support, which they insisted would be enough for him to stay on as Leader. No one saw the 48 percent sinker ball coming. But the signs were there.

After the Socialist Caucus launched a national campaign for Leadership Review in late October, a number of prominent NDP leftist figures called for change at the top. Ontario MPP Cheri DiNovo, and Sid Ryan, former president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, led the way. NDP electoral district association presidents and local labour council officials added their voices. Then 37 prominent Quebec NDP activists issued an open letter calling for change in the party's direction. On the other hand, five heads of unions publicly backed Mulcair. And the mass media weighed in, mostly on his side. The party staff commandeered huge resources to conduct highly manipulated telephone Town Halls, and to host scores of events to promote "fighter" Mulcair all across the country.

But that was countered by the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, Hassan Yussuff, who predicted that Mulcair would be defeated. In fact, on the eve of the vote, leaders of CUPE and UNIFOR "released" their delegates from a pledge to support Mulcair. This came after the 274-strong Labour Caucus, which met on Saturday morning, took no position on the issue. In the words of Bob Dylan, "It doesn't take a weatherman to know which way the wind is blow'in."

The convention showed Mulcair the door, but asked him to pause at the exit -- to stay on as parliamentary Leader until a race to replace him can be orchestrated. That contest will culminate in a one-member-one-vote election, and a policy convention, to be held 18 months to two years from now.

Delegates also voted about 60 percent

in favour of conducting a grassroots discussion of the environmental and social justice proposals in the Leap Manifesto. *Toronto Star* columnist Tom Walkom describes the document as "middle of the road". Journalist and former NDP star candidate Linda McQuaig asks "What's with all the ruckus over the Leap Manifesto? Reports of its scariness have been greatly exaggerated; its call for a transition from fossil fuels to green energy is solidly based in science and widely accepted."

This begs the question: why have the capitalist media and bourgeois politicians been pouring abuse on the Manifesto, and on NDPers who backed it and who voted to dump Mulcair?

The reason is simple: they fear that the party right wing will lose control of the apparatus. They worry that the left will gravitate towards radical socialist politics that call into question, not only capitalist austerity, but the system itself. The ouster of "balanced-budget at-all-costs" Mulcair, and the warm welcome accorded Leap's critique of growing inequality, job precarity, and environmental plunder, greatly disturb the Canadian Establishment.

Will the Canadian left turn up the heat, and work to set the agenda for fundamental change? Well, that would require quite a break in practice -- an end to navel gazing by leftists outside the NDP, and an end to nit-picking and juvenile name-calling by some inside the labour-based party.

The answer will come soon as local forums and discussions get underway. The openness to such debates has rarely been so great. The convention in Edmonton, despite its rigged policy priorities process, and dubious guest speakers (like John Ashworth, one of the most right wing members of Jeremy Corbyn's British Labour Party leftist Shadow Cabinet), was nonetheless the most open NDP convention in decades.

A proliferation of independent issue campaigns and candidates greeted delegates at registration. This included CUPW members for postal banking, folks who want to abolish the monarchy, and proponents of proportional representation in parliament. One group, with scissors in hand, snipped hundreds of credential-holding lanyards embossed with Mulcair's name and replaced them with plain ribbons. Soon a huge pile of discarded lanyards accumulated on the Shaw Communications Centre carpet, while a tray heaped high with Tom Mulcair buttons sat ignored on the registration counter.

Party officials provided the Socialist Caucus a venue for its meetings, along with a display table in the hallway -- after refusing SC requests for three months. The socialists faced no hassle from officials when they unfurled a huge banner "For Democracy and Socialism Back in the NDP" in the main corridor, and even on the convention floor. Likewise, the SC had no problem distributing nearly 900 copies of its full-colour, glossy magazine *Turn Left*, nor any difficulty collecting over \$850 in donations and revenue from sales of literature and buttons at its highly visible campaign depot.

For the first time the meetings of the NDP socialists were listed in the official Delegate Kit, and the group name was spelled with capitals 'S' and 'C'. Six meetings of the caucus took place, all well-attended.

Over 70 people signed up to join the SC, which worked cooperatively and successfully with Momentum - the NDP's left alternative to austerity, with RENEW the PARTY, and New Democrats for the Leap Manifesto. A joint lunch time meeting of supporters of Leap and the SC brought together about 60 delegates, chaired by this writer, to discuss floor tactics for the Sunday morning environment issues debate.

Momentum and Socialist Caucus co-hosted a very popular and enjoyable pub night.

In the weeks leading up to the convention, the SC gained wide media attention. This included in-depth interviews on CBC Radio's *As It Happens*, CTV's *Power Play* Panel, CPAC (3 times), the *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Le Devoir*, *TVA* and *Radio Canada* in Quebec, *Huffington Post*, three talk radio shows (in Montreal, Calgary and London, Ontario), *680 News*, several refer-

This was a good one

By Dale Perkins

It was immediately evident to all who looked in on the NDP Convention, which took place in Edmonton, Alberta, how strange that in an era of hyper technology with a legion of electronic toys about, over 1,000 people would congregate in one place, at one time to talk with one another face-to-face rather than hiding out at internet cafes or residences with their reading tablets, computers and iphones "webinar-ing" or texting ad nauseam.

There they were, sitting at tables lined up and facing forward towards a large stage where a moderator presided using procedures, by-laws and constitutions established long ago. Numbered floor mikes, protocol, rules, and 25-30 second time limits on speakers were the "order of the day". Then to hear that delegates were to come into the hall for a vote, as "the doors will be tiled" preventing access or departure by delegates -- what is this term "tiling" all about?

So witnessing such strange rituals was quite amazing. But everyone seemed to think it was done very well, and the Chair was congratulated for running a great convention.

Then there were the requisite speeches by delegates wearing necklaces indicating they had credentials and were *bona fide* participants with several key-note speakers scheduled into the proceedings.

Perhaps the most honoured was the "Eminence grise" Stephen Lewis, now 79 years of age (and visibly upset that his age and stamina limited him from playing a more active role in the political terrain in Parliament and the country). He spoke his usual, lyrical best -- further evidence that he is probably the best orator in Canada. No one could match him, even if they wanted to. He has a way with the English language that most of us would give our "crown jewels" to possess.

And then there was Tom Mulcair, who went into the convention as the NDP leader with full rights and privileges. He had decided to continue on as Party leader, even though suffering a humiliating set-back at the last federal election. Many of us thought -- had the election campaign gone on for six weeks instead of the 11 weeks set by Harper & Co., Mulcair would now be the prime minister of Canada, and the NDP would have held the largest number of seats in the House.

However that never happened, and now Mulcair bore the brunt of the collective disappointment of the Party and the great burden of its anger for having been thwarted. Although Mr. Mulcair agreed to carry on, he was required to test the will of the convention by securing a majority vote from the delegates. They didn't give it to him; 52 % of the delegates decided the Party had to choose another leader over the next

ences in the *Toronto Star*, the *Toronto Sun*, the *Hill Times*, plus an Op-Ed by this writer published in the *Ottawa Citizen*.

At the same time, venomous attacks by National Post writers and by former senior NDP staffers Gerry Caplan and Robin Sears appeared. They claimed the SC has little influence -- *before* Mulcair was defeated, *before* the Leap discussion was launched, and *before* various socialist policies won significant support in policy workshops.

Jointly with Momentum, the SC ran 16 candidates for party executive and federal council posts. Vote results, ranging from 5.2% to 15%, revealed a significant hard core radical left base. It also indicated that, while the broad membership wants change, it is not yet convinced of the need for a Marxist program. But the SC will continue to make the case for revolutionary change. That was the essence of my president candidate speech to the convention (see below), which elicited rounds of applause. Toronto's Marit Stiles, who was elected NDP president, and Montrealer Elaine Michaud, who ran second, refused to say whether they wanted a Leadership Review, and only vaguely indicated that they favoured some kind of "reform" and "renewal".

12 and a "bit" months. Nothing he did that weekend or in the months after the election convinced the Party to keep him on as its leader.

Political pundits and commentators immediately began to "dissect the bird", i.e. Mulcair's performance and leadership style, to explain the purge and treatment he experienced. Now like the Conservatives, the NDP is a Party without a bona fide leader. (BTW, the Green Party and Elizabeth May are in exactly the opposite circumstance. That is to say, the Greens have a leader but effectively no Party.)

The Liberals now seem to be in excellent shape, with its "Sunny days" leader and a rejuvenated Party. However, they too appear to be on shaky ground, what with the many scandals plaguing them, such as the revelations that Trudeau and Dion signed off the Saudi sale of military equipment (some 15 billion dollars worth), pretending that their hands were tied because of Harper & Co's agreement made prior to the election. That is now revealed as an "untruth" and Dion and Trudeau are misrepresenting the facts.

Add to that the myriad of other Trudeau/Liberal promises made during the election campaign that are getting sidelined or ignored. Perhaps the veneer of Trudeau/Liberal commitments are falling away, leaving the very naked reality that the Emperor and his Empire are wearing no clothes.

The NDP convention did many important things: for instance it raised the bar as far as public awareness and engagement over practices and policies engulfing our country and world regarding climate change.

Certainly passing a recommendation that all NDP constituencies read and discuss the Leap Manifesto was a powerful signal. Doing that will energize and animate many people and could lead to legislation that will affect the future of Canada and the entire globe.

For that reason alone we can be thankful for the bold leadership offered by the NDP. It will be a very challenging discussion/debate, as vested interests compete for popular decisions. That too was signalled at the convention, with very different perspectives and opinion being expressed by delegates from Alberta, Saskatchewan and other provinces. How that gets played out over the next several years will be pivotal in determining the future of the NDP, to say nothing of the viability of humankind.

And where all of this will lead the NDP no one can predict. Nevertheless, we can be thankful that the Party has launched the debate over the Leap Manifesto and welcomed the full engagement by people throughout the country around this major issue of our time. On other fronts, we can only speculate.

However as conventions go, this was a good one.

Delegates demonstrated significant support for socialist policies on Palestine and BDS, favouring the need to dedicate 80% of convention time to discussion of resolutions (as opposed to less than 32 percent presently), to establish public Pharmacare, and to institute steeply progressive taxation. These issues were featured in the 4 Ps Petition circulated by the SC during the summer of 2015, signed by hundreds of party members. The SC attracted over 30 percent delegates' support for an early bid to amend the convention agenda. This was later attempted by the sizable Quebec delegation.

The Persons Living with disAbilities Caucus won an important change that will benefit all members. It requires that resolutions and proposed constitution amendments be posted and circulated weeks before a convention, not just days in advance. The convention also adopted a more open and accountable candidate vetting process. This gain was in response to the outrage provoked by decisions of the federal office to block or rescind several potential NDP candidates in 2015 who expressed pro-Palestinian views.

Please turn to Mulcair out, on page 6

It's our opinion

A desperate wake up call for inspiration

Originally I was going to write about the Edmonton NDP convention, then about Parliament and the Liberals' defeated power grab, but then I got a phone call that changed my focus.

It is urgent that the BC NDP win the next provincial election. In fact, it is a matter of life and death for many. BC's current government is utterly corrupted, blinded by greed and graft and utterly uncaring of the citizens for whom they supposedly work.

Money, it is said, is the root cause of evil, but lack of money and lack of compassion are the root causes of hopelessness.

We are currently governed by selfish, myopic fillers of their own pockets whilst those we expect to be helped are left to die on our streets, in hopeless despair, heartbroken and crushed.

Yesterday as I sat at my computer a Facebook friend who knew I had worked for social housing asked if she could phone me. I said yes because for me, saying no is rarely an option. What she told me reminded me of what I had left behind in my blissful retirement from work; it reminded me that there is still much work to do and that only the NDP wants do it.

Laura -- not her real name -- is a single mom who has just turned 55 and whose daughter has just turned 19. Laura can no longer stay in family housing as her daughter has left school.

Her daughter has mental health issues and a compromised immune system which leaves her vulnerable to a complete shutdown of her vital organs if she fails to receive a monthly shot that boosts her immunity. Although Laura herself is on PWD, she has not encouraged her daughter to apply for Persons With Disability status. Laura does not want to introduce her to the system that stigmatizes while failing to help, that labels you incapable and punishes you if you try to grow and better yourself. It's a system designed to leave you in poverty yet claims otherwise.

Laura's daughter is, for now, a party girl and Mom had to make her leave the home recently because of her disruptive behaviour. But Mom is not abandoning her daughter. Mom honours her daughter's desire to further her education, but there is no help or universe of help within the system to guide this young woman through her difficulties.

The difficulties are these:

1. They cannot be housed together unless the daughter is continuing her education and then only to age 26.
2. Mom and daughter can be housed separately, but live in a small town area called Lake Country, where social housing is scarce. Moving to a larger area means leaving the supporters -- friends and family -- behind while exposing her daughter to more unsavory influencers.
3. The daughter needs not only mental health medication and other medication, but ongoing counselling and mentoring.
4. Laura has medical concerns as well; she was once a strong woman, but endless stress has worn her out (did you know that worrying about housing for as little as three weeks causes mental health distress? Laura has had to worry far longer). She also needs counselling to help her cope.
5. Laura's car needs repair, but as a result of no longer having her daughter at home she has lost \$500 per month and can no longer save for this. The special transportation needs subsidies are not helpful nor is the \$77 per month PWD increase in the face of rising costs all around her.
6. Laura's MLA is not helpful. She has called that office and it takes them days to weeks to return a call. Often the help that is given is just a repeat of what is in the available leaflets or on websites, there is no attempt to meet and understand individual situations, the system is inflexible, outdated and now creates as many problems as it resolves.
7. Every small difficulty looms larger for her because she is poor and stressed than it would for those of us more financially resilient and therefore more emotionally and mentally stable.
8. Laura must prove her eligibility for housing every six months. This is unusual, BC Housing only requires proof of income annually, but this society has chosen a harsher path.

I have detailed this for you without the quavering voice, shaking with repressed emotion, without the stress and fear that I heard yesterday.

What is needed? The answer is clear to me: an NDP government. Only such a government will carry out what independent voices like that of Mary Ellen Turpel Lafond, the Representative of Children and Youth, are telling us.

When the NDP was previously in government, it tried to make sure that the pieces of the puzzle fit together. Ministries had a better understanding of their shared responsibilities; there were more social workers and counsellors of every kind. There were more helpful programs and far more housing was being built. The NDP could have done more and wasn't perfect, but far more help was available then than is the case today.

Yesterday's phone call was a desperate call, a wake-up call and for a new government, a call for inspiration.

What I hope is coming soon, in just 346 days from the time of writing, is a government built on LOVE for British Columbians, providing HOPE and help to all; creating a new OPTIMISM and a society where every citizen counts. -- SS

The Lower Island NEWS

The *Lower Island NEWS*, in its 33rd 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

Guest Editorial Writer: Sue Stroud

Distribution: Staff

Advertising: Dale Young

Contributors to this issue: Starla Anderson, Jean Crowder, Randall Garrison, Jim Hackler, Carole James, Alistair MacGregor, Bill Graham, Anna Johnston, Gerry Masuda, Diane McNally, David Olsen, Ben Parfitt, Philip Kevin Paul, Tim Pheotist, Dale Perkins, Monisha Sebastian, Diane Walsh, Barry Weisleder, 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

Words are not enough

By Dale Perkins

These words are the title of the Canadian entry into the fund-raising bonanza launched internationally at the time Ethiopian folks were starving. The combined song-writing efforts coming from many countries produced over a million dollars for aid to help in that extremely important rescue mission.

Finding the right words becomes the primary occupation of everyone from Advertisers to Preachers. Never having been a paid Advertiser I know very little of that occupation. However, Preacher I've been, and know well how important words are for the "Wordsmiths" occupying pulpits everywhere.

My life was awash in words...words about the Word, words about words used to express the Word, and words about the limitation of words (to quote the extraordinary US American preacher, Robin Meyers). Yet the primary "marching orders" from the ancient Nazarene followers purportedly are called to emulate -- Jesus of Nazareth -- was to follow his way and to go and do likewise (not to go and talk likewise).

We were commanded to take action to save a dying world, not just talk about how awful it is that the world is dying. Meyers is relentless in describing the hypocrisy deeply embedded inside the institutional church to require linguistic purity while ignoring social reality. He writes, "We no longer can afford the luxury of a church that is bent over its writing desk, but cannot find its boots and gloves," and he dramatically insists that the world is changed not by those who condemn, but by those who act.

Jesus' followers first received their job description before they were taken on as disciples. The assignment preceded the naming, and then they were sent out to follow in his way of living their faith and not be satisfied just to talk about it.

How have we so misunderstood this central characteristic of servanthood? The disparity between words and actions is permeated throughout our society, and sadly we continue the practice without qualms or regret.

Words may not be enough, but there must be some congruity between the words we use and the actions that follow immediately on their heels. If there is meaning

from words, then there must be some consistency of meaning. Otherwise words are nothing more than sound bites and noise.

Of course the institutional Christian church is not the only culprit. Society is rift with other potent examples of words changing their meaning. We need look no further than the word "neoliberalism" (a favored expression among political commentators). This is a relatively new English word that has evolved and now is used unsparingly to deride certain political manifestations of late. It involves taking two previously acceptable and understood words to refer to very specific and degraded social movements.

Neoliberalism now means having a complete reliance on the Market Place to control and determine public behaviour. Also it means cutting government-funded social services like education and health care. Plus neoliberalism urges deregulating all government standards and encourages state-owned enterprises, goods and services to be handed over to private investors. In the process concepts and practices such as public good will and community get relegated to the dust bin, and individual responsibility assumes the preeminent position.

If there are people who can't participate in this game, they are labelled "lazy" and non players in the new world order which has taken over. Nonparticipants are now considered unworthy as citizens, and quickly dismissed. In other words (sic) we have seen how two innocent and generally favoured words have been joined together to mean the diametric opposite to what was once understood to be their meaning.

Words are like that -- one day they can mean something specific and particular, and the next day they've been taken over by other forces to mean something quite different. Like the song lyrics -- words are not enough -- we can only know for sure what words mean by examining the actions that emanate from using them.

As my dear old grandmother used to admonish me, "Watch what words fly out of your mouth, Dale. Once they're gone they can't be retrieved, and they won't necessarily mean what you want to say."

Thanks grandma; I'll be careful and pick my words wisely.

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. The next issue of the *Lower Island News* will be in early September.

The deadline for submitting advertising and articles for the next issue will be Friday, August 19.

For further information and to obtain advertising rates, please email dale_young@telus.net or phone 250-384-7621.

Kudos

Thank you for the terrific article on Alicia Cormier in the March issue of LIN. It was quite a spread; also, with the news about Irene Wright and then her article about Jean Crowder. Saanich-Gulf Islands up front!

Also in that section, see the very good article about Norm Levi by John Bell. John and I were two of the four people mentioned in the last paragraph who met regularly with Norm for the past several years for lunch, and previously many times over the years at his home. He was a giant of a socialist NDP minister in Dave Barrett's government, and a great friend.

We four continue to meet on some Tuesdays for lunch to remember Norm and to solve all the world's political problems. Who needs Justin, Hillary or the Donald??

Bill Graham, Victoria

Drug laws need to be more humane

Re: "Injection sites could save lives," *Times Colonist* editorial, February 28.

I recently attended a forum on this issue at Victoria city hall, sponsored by YES2SCS (Yes to Supervised Consumption Services). The forum was informative and convincing. I learned that over the past decade in Vancouver, thousands of lives have been saved because people with addictions have been able to take their drugs at a safe-injection site with a medical team present.

But safe-injection sites are only the beginning of changes needed to overcome what is being called an "overdose epidemic" in North America. In 1972, Canada's federal government financed a royal commission of inquiry into the non-medical use of drugs (also called the Le Dain Commission). The commission's key recommendations included legal distribution of cannabis, and monitoring of cannabis and other drug use in relation to users' health and societal impacts.

These recommendations were ignored and the criminal focus on the distribution and use of non-medical drugs remained. If a health model had been adopted all those years ago, how many fewer deaths would there have been? And if cannabis had been government-regulated, how many fewer people would have been incarcerated?

Young people are seduced by the lure of recreational drug use and escape from mental-health demons, but middle-aged people with what appear to be good stable lives also get seduced. Until our laws about drug distribution are more humanely drawn, a safe-injection site is necessary for anyone with drug addictions who needs the services it provides.

Starla Anderson, Victoria

Trade agreements and surrender of our sovereignty

With each new trade agreement imposed on us, it appears that We the People lose more of our sovereignty.

I understood that Parliament reigned supreme and had the power to impose any legislation, only constrained by our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Now these trade agreements, negotiated in secret, are placing constraints on Parliament's legislative powers.

Not only are the terms of the trade agreements being negotiated in secret, but these terms can be kept secret after the agreements have been approved. It appears that the interests of We the People are being trampled on and abused. It is time to stop this and consider taking back our lost [sovereignty](#) by formally abrogating these treaties.

Would it be possible for organizations such as the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) and universities to investigate this loss of sovereignty through trade agreements and whether the terms of these agreements violate our Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Gerry Masuda, Duncan

Friends of the Lower Island News

Three months have gone by since we produced and mailed our last issue to you. We regret having such long times between issues--it is certainly not for lack of material for our amazing writers to write about--but merely, as you have no doubt guessed, the ever rising cost of producing and mailing the paper to you.

We are committed to producing at least four issues a year for as long as we can. And we are continually grateful to readers like you who donate to the paper.

Keeping this paper financed is an on-going challenge, and we are always on the lookout for potential new advertisers. so if you know of a business--small or large--that might like to get its name in front of our progressive readers, please contact me at dale_young@telus.net.

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

David A. Duncan	\$30
Red Hens	\$20

If you like this issue of 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 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

Raise the rates, leave our bus pass alone

Open Letter to Premier Christy Clark, released May 18, signed by over 160 organizations from across BCBC

Dear Premier Clark:

We are writing in response to your government's budget, tabled on February 16, 2016, which announced a modest increase of \$77 to persons with disabilities benefits while also drastically changing important programs that improve access to transportation for many people with disabilities. For the reasons set out in this letter, our organizations strongly oppose the changes to the BC Bus Pass Program and the Special Transportation Subsidy. We call on the government to leave these programs in place, and to provide a meaningful rate increase for all income assistance and disability assistance recipients.

The BC Bus Pass Program currently offers an annual bus pass at a reduced cost of \$45 per year for disability assistance recipients in areas where BC Transit and Translink operate. The Special Transportation Subsidy provides a lump sum subsidy to people who reside in an area where the Bus Pass Program operates, but are unable to use public transit because of a disability, to help offset the cost of alternative transportation. Approximately 55,000 of the 100,000 provincial disability assistance recipients rely on one of these two transportation programs. Many of our organizations work directly with people with disabilities, and all are acutely aware of the importance of these programs to ensure people are able to move about their communities, whether that be to shop for basic necessities, attend medical appointments, go to school, or take part in social gatherings.

As you know, those who rely on these programs will now be charged \$52/month for a bus pass, or \$66/month for the Special Transportation Subsidy. This means that for those recipients, the rate increase is actually only \$25 or \$11, respectively. Further, the government has said that it will still charge the \$45 per year "administrative fee" on top of that. Promoting the change as a \$77 increase to disability rates is misleading and unfair. While the government maintains that its aim is to make the system fairer for people with disabilities who do not currently receive support for transportation, the proposed changes are not the right approach.

It has been almost a decade since the government has increased income assistance and disability rates—and at \$906 per month, disability assistance rates in BC are among the lowest in the country. In Alberta, for example, the government increased the comparable disability benefit (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)) to \$1588 in 2012. The recently announced \$77 increase to BC's disability assistance rates would be a welcome (if inadequate) change, if it were truly providing that increase to all.

When the change was announced, the Honourable Minister of Finance Michael de Jong spoke about how it would allow those on disability assistance "the freedom to make their own choice about how to meet their own unique transportation needs". For many liv-

ing in poverty in BC, this is not a real choice. While the \$77 increase will undeniably help those living outside the areas where the Bus Pass Program and Special Transportation Subsidy operate, it creates an impossible choice for those that do rely on these transportation programs. With disability assistance frozen at a paltry \$906 per month—an amount clearly inadequate to meet basic needs—it will be difficult not to opt to put the \$77 each month toward previously unmet needs like food or rent.

The Bus Pass Program and Special Transportation Subsidy allowed vulnerable members of our communities to make a \$45 purchase once per year, and then have a reliable method of transportation year-round. The proposed changes to these programs will result in social isolation for those who "choose" not to renew, particularly for those with disabilities that restrict their mobility.

Finally, we are concerned about implementation of the proposed changes, which will inevitably be fraught with practical problems for both disability assistance recipients and Ministry staff. Over the last several years, there has been a radical shift from in-person services at local Ministry offices to services that are primarily delivered through a centralized phone line and over the internet. Wait times on the phone line are long, and many users of Ministry services lack the reliable phone or computer access required to access the services—and may also lack the capacity to navigate the new systems. It is difficult to reach Ministry staff at all, let alone the appropriate staff for a particular matter. Many that rely on the current transportation programs fear they will be unable to access Ministry staff in a timely way to resolve the issues that arise, and that staff will be ill-equipped to address the problems.

As our provincial government tabled its budget, it celebrated BC's strong financial outlook. Minister de Jong emphasized that BC is in a position to "offer greater support to the most vulnerable among us." It is long past due for the government to make real commitments to do just that – and to share some of this province's wealth with the members of our communities that need it most.

Our organizations collectively urge you to:

- Bring back the \$45 per year bus pass for people with disabilities;
- Eliminate the new \$52/month bus pass fee;
- Allow everyone receiving PWD benefits to keep the \$77/month increase;
- Bring back the Special Transportation Subsidy, and introduce a rural transportation subsidy for those living outside the areas where the Bus Pass Program and Special Transportation Subsidy operate; and
- Raise income and disability assistance significantly by October 1, 2016 to reflect the cost of living, and then index to inflation.

Sincerely,

1. Aboriginal Front Door
2. Action Committee of People with Disabilities
3. Africa Great Lakes Networking Foundation (AGL)
4. AIDS Network, Outreach & Support Society (ANKORS)
5. AIDS Vancouver Island
6. AiMHi – Prince George Association for Community Living
7. AMS Bike Co-op
8. Anglican Eco-Justice Unit, Diocese of New Westminster
9. ASPECT BC
10. Association Advocating for Women & Children (AWAC) – Prince George
11. Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC
12. BC ACORN
13. BC Association of Child Development and Intervention
14. BC Association of Social Workers
15. BC Council for Families
16. BC Federation of Community Social Services
17. BC Federation of Labour
18. BC Federation of Retired Union Members (BC FORUM)
19. BC Federation of Students
20. BC Government and Service Employees' Union
21. BC Health Coalition
22. BC Initiative for Inclusive Post-secondary Education (STEPS Forward)
23. BC Non-Profit Housing Association
24. BC Nurses Union
25. BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
26. BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre
27. BC Teachers' Federation
28. BeConnected Support Services
29. Beneath One Sky Community Support Society
30. British Columbia Schizophrenia Society
31. British Columbia Schizophrenia Society, Prince George Branch
32. Burnaby Community Services
33. Campbell River and District Association for Community Living
34. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – BC Office
35. Canadian Deaf Blind Association, BC Chapter
36. Canadian Mental Health Association, North and West Vancouver Branch
37. Carnegie Community Action Project
38. Cerebral Palsy Association of BC
39. Chilliwack Society for Community Living
40. Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods
41. Claytree Society for People with Developmental Disabilities
42. Clements Centre Society
43. Committee to End Homelessness, Victoria
44. Community Integration Services Society
45. Community Legal Assistance Society
46. Community Living Society
47. Community Living Victoria
48. Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria
49. Community Ventures Society
50. Cool-aid Society – YES
51. COSCO (Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C.)
52. Cowichan Valley Basket Society
53. Cridge Centre for the Family
54. Dandelion Society
55. Dawson Creek Society for Community Living
56. Delta Community Living Society
57. Disability Alliance BC
58. Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House
59. Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
60. Empowered Living Services
61. Faith in Action
62. Family Net
63. Family Services of Greater Vancouver
64. Family Support Institute of BC
65. Federation of Post-Secondary Educators
66. First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition

Please turn to page 6, Open Letter

Open letter to Premier Clark, signers' list, from page 5

- | | |
|---|--|
| 67. Fort St. John Society for Community Living | 120. PLAN Institute |
| 68. Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association | 121. Port Alberni Association for Community Living |
| 69. Fraserside Community Services Society | 122. PosAbilities |
| 70. Gitskan Government Commission | 123. Princeton and District Community Services Society |
| 71. Gordon Neighbourhood House | 124. Raging Grannies of Maple Ridge |
| 72. Greater Trail Community Skills Centre | 125. Raise the Rates BC |
| 73. O.M.E.S – Healthy Opportunities for Meaningful Experience Society | 126. Realistic Success Recovery Society |
| 74. Health Sciences Association of BC | 127. Realize Coop |
| 75. Hospital Employees' Union | 128. Richmond Centre for Disability |
| 76. Inclusion BC | 129. Richmond Poverty Response Committee |
| 77. Inclusion BC Foundation | 130. Richmond Society for Community Living |
| 78. Inclusion Kamloops | 131. Ridge Meadows Association for Community Living |
| 79. Inclusion Parksville | 132. Salvation Army Stan Hagen Centre for Families |
| 80. Inclusion Powell River | 133. Sea to Sky Community Services Society |
| 81. Indigenous Women's Action Group | 134. Semiahmoo House Society |
| 82. Interdependent Investments | 135. Shuswap Association for Community Living |
| 83. Interior BC Community Services Co-operative | 136. Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG) |
| 84. Intersect Youth and Family Services Society | 137. Sisters of St. Ann Social Justice Committee |
| 85. It's My Life Kamloops Society | 138. Slocan Valley Seniors Housing Society |
| 86. Kamloops and District Labour Council | 139. Social Planning and Research Council BC (SPARC) |
| 87. Kindale Developmental Association | 140. Society for Children and Youth of BC |
| 88. Kiwassa Neighbourhood House | 141. Society of Intravenous Drug Users – S.O.L.I.D. |
| 89. Kootenay Advocacy Network | 142. John the Divine, Victoria |
| 90. Kwantlen Public Interest Research Group – KPIRG | 143. Vincent de Paul, Victoria |
| 91. Lifetimes Networks Victoria | 144. STEPS Forward |
| 92. Living Wage for Families Campaign | 145. Sunshine Coast Association for Community Living |
| 93. Megaphone Magazine | 146. Terrace and District Community Services Society |
| 94. Mid-Main Community Health Centre | 147. Thompson Community Services |
| 95. Milieu Family Services | 148. Thompson Okanagan Community Services Co-operative |
| 96. Mission Association for Community Living | 149. Together Against Poverty Society |
| 97. Mom2Mom Child Poverty Initiative | 150. Trail FAIR Society |
| 98. MoveUP | 151. Umbrella Society for Addictions and Mental Health |
| 99. MSA Society for Community Living | 152. Vancity Community Foundation |
| 100. Mustard Seed Church | 153. Vancouver and District Labour Council |
| 101. Nanaimo Association for Community Living | 154. Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society (VPWAS) |
| 102. Nelson CARES Society | 155. Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG) |
| 103. Nelson Committee on Homelessness | 156. Vela Microboard Association of BC |
| 104. Nelson Community Services Centre | 157. Victoria Disability Resource Centre |
| 105. New Perspectives on Community Living Society | 158. Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society – VIRCS |
| 106. New Westminster & District Labour Council | 159. Victoria Native Friendship Centre |
| 107. North Shore ConneXions | 160. Victoria Youth Clinic |
| 108. North Shore Disability Resource Centre | 161. Williams Lake Association for Community Living |
| 109. Oasis Society | 162. Women Against Violence Against Women – Rape Crisis Centre (WAWAV) |
| 110. Our Place Society | |
| 111. Pacific Centre Family Services Association | |
| 112. Pacific Community Resources Society | |
| 113. Pacific Developmental Pathways Limited | |
| 114. Parent Support Services Society of BC | |
| 115. Pathways Abilities Society | |
| 116. Penticton and District Society for Community Living | |
| 117. Pivot Legal Society | |
| 118. Pivot Point Family Growth Centre | |
| 119. PLAN – Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network | |

Mulcair is out, change is in, from page 3

What's next? The key tasks facing the party left include:

1. Promote and advance the discussion on the Leap Manifesto.
2. Emphasize the need for public ownership and democratic control of Big Oil and Gas, and the entire energy sector.
3. Demand justice for indigenous peoples. Economic restitution is the basis for moral reconciliation. Resource corporations and the government must pay.
4. Explore running a socialist candidate for NDP Leader, or support someone like MP Nikki Ashton, Linda McQuaig, or Avi Lewis. Defeat MP Nathan Cullen who argued for a coalition with the Liberal Party in 2011, and who favours fossil fuels and

more resource extraction projects provided a "social license" is obtained from First Nations.

The dethronement of Mulcair occurred less than two years after Ken Georgetti was deposed as reigning Canadian Labour Congress president. Two incumbents forced out of top positions by a major body of working class delegates in Canada is unprecedented. It is a reflection of the keen appetite for change. It is testament to the resurgence of socialist ideas in Britain, in the USA, and beyond. It is also a sign of things to come in Canada.

Barry Weisleder is chair of the Socialist caucus of the New Democratic Party.

Yes, but can they govern?

By Jim Hackler

In my conversations with intelligent, progressive people, who are not NDP members, they often acknowledge that NDP arguments make good sense. They also acknowledge that many NDP candidates would probably be good members of either provincial legislatures or parliament. But can they work with others when agreement is hard to reach?

We have evidence of effective NDP governments elsewhere, such as in Saskatchewan. Historically, civil servants with clear NDP biases have been in demand in both federal and provincial governments across Canada.

But many of these thoughtful progressives still ask, "Can the NDP govern?" Can they work with other elected representatives? Some of us believe that people in elected positions, who are not NDP, often have good ideas. Are NDP members able to listen, and possibly learn, from those who have different political views?

Criticism is an important aspect of being in opposition. Certainly we want debate. But is that all we expect? During question period do we really ask questions? Or are we performing for the public? Sound bites, clever phrases and rejoinders trump genuine discussion. We confuse noise with effectiveness. Is "megaphone diplomacy" good government? Some of this is inevitable, of course. But is the current BC government completely venal, incompetent, and serving only the wealthy? Are all of the members of governing party lacking in integrity?

Knowledgeable people note that BC's carbon pricing is wiser than much of Canada's.

BC's First Nation's policies have, at times, been above average. I think NDP policies are generally superior, but over the years I have known, and respected, a number of conservative thinkers for their integrity, and occasionally for their ideas.

Can liberal thinkers work with conservatives? When I taught criminology at the University of Alberta, Grant Notley was our inspiring NDP leader, but we did poorly at elections. After the Social Credit Party lost to the Conservatives, the Socreds asked me to do a study for them on crime in Alberta. They knew I was active in the NDP. Despite my political leanings they wanted a scientific analysis of crime in Alberta.

I did the research, produced four papers with data and policy recommendations, and included a disclaimer that these were my recommendations, not those of the Social Credit Party. Their caucus read the papers, liked my ideas, and asked me to remove the disclaimer. My left wing policy recommendations became those of the Socreds. Incidentally, Bob Clark, leader of the Party at the time, was an intelligent person of integrity. Could the NDP work with such people?

Admittedly, an election platform that suggests working together may fail. Tom Mulcair offered some reasonable ideas in the last federal election, but there was little he could do with the rise in popularity of Justin Trudeau. He was probably unfairly punished at the Edmonton convention.

The Edmonton convention also saw the Leap Manifesto. Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis offered ideas that stimulate the left. These are appropriate aspects of NDP thinking, but they don't provide a good basis for the sort of compromises necessary to actually govern.

At times we polarize our thinking into capitalism and socialism. I do not have to point out the dangers of capitalism to readers of the *Lower Island News*. But socialism can also do damage. In Russia, the

Aral Sea, the world's largest inland lake, once had 30,000 fishermen and produced one-sixth of Russia's fish. It is now dry – an environmental disaster because of government mismanagement.

Admittedly, Russia and China are not necessarily good illustrations of socialism. *Democratic* socialism has done better, and in Scandinavia, some forms of capitalism, carefully restricted and taxed by governments working for the benefit of all, seem to be effective in many situations.

Basically, I am arguing that governing in a complex world requires cooperation and compromise among those with different political views. Politicians in government need more detail, more science, and more insight than is available to, or well understood by, most voters.

Climate change is a good illustration of the challenges we face. We need to save trees and avoid pollution, but the forest industry is important to BC economics.

Some are opposed to pipelines. Without pipelines we will move more oil by railroad, which we know will lead to more pollution and environmental damage.

Despite our support for sustainable energy, we cannot run an aluminum factory with windmills, even with massive subsidies. We are also unwilling to give up our cars and use public transportation.

Is good government in the modern world beyond the reach of a political party that cannot work with people with different views? The hostility of the NDP toward the Green Party has certainly lost the NDP both respect and credibility. For some goals, cooperation with people you don't necessarily like, is a must.

But perhaps I am too cautious. In 1972, when Dave Barrett, with 39% of the popular vote was elected (Social Credit, Liberals, and Conservatives split the remainder), he did not waste much time trying to soothe his opponents. During three years in office, the NDP government enacted 367 pieces of legislation, two bills a week. No BC government before or since has produced so much legislation. The Agricultural Land Reserve dramatically reshaped urban and rural development. An environmental secretariat laid the foundation for real protection of wilderness. The welfare system was overhauled. Human rights were protected and a new labour code came into being. The province made major investments in housing, daycare and transit.

Did Barrett try to do everything at once? Did he make mistakes? Of course. Did this flamboyant, headlong rush to change so many things put the citizens of BC ahead faster? Would a more cautious and carefully studied approach provide a more enduring legacy? We don't really know.

By contrast in Alberta Premier Rachel Notley is facing some practical realities that require cooperation with those holding different political views.

Perhaps I overate the benefits of cooperation. The next provincial election will probably feature vicious criticism and simplistic ideas. But today's question still remains for many hesitant BC voters—can the NDP govern rather than just attack?

Jim Jaarsma
Contracting
250-360-1905

Quality Carpentry
General Contracting

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

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

Deconstructing the school-to-prison pipeline

By Starla Anderson

Some time ago I helped a middle-aged man learn to write the letters of the alphabet and join them together so that he could write his signature.

In all my 40-plus years of teaching, I have never felt more rewarded than when he beamingly showed me his handwritten signature—the first that he had ever written. I asked him how he had managed to get by without knowing how to write his name and he showed me the scribble he had used, a scribble not unlike those that educated people sometimes use to have a signature that is difficult to copy.



These days, children are more likely to be tapping keyboards than using penmanship to write compositions but for my middle-aged student, a goal had been reached when he had been able to write a legible signature. Because of an undiagnosed learning disability, he had been unable to learn in a classroom and was too often in trouble with teachers; by Grade 5, his dad took him out of school and taught him a building trade that he worked in for more than 30 years. I met this middle-aged man when I tutored him in prison.

More than half of the prisoners I have tutored, who are working towards secondary-school completion, have learning disabilities. The most common disabilities among them are Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia (a condition that affects the way the brain processes written and spoken language). Neither of these conditions has anything to do with general intelligence, but the consequences of having these conditions without having adequate support to move forward developmentally can be devastating.

Some of the most recent facts about Canadians living with learning disabilities are summarized in a document handed out at a January conference organized by the Learning Disabilities Association of Van-

couver, *Supporting the Learning Disabled Child in Canadian Schools*(2016):

- Average to above average intellectual ability
- More than 12% of all Canadians have a Learning Disability (over 3 million people in Canada have a Learning Disability)
- 35% of students identified with a Learning Disability drop out of high school, twice the rate of non-disabled peers.
- Up to 70% of inmates in Canadian prisons are Learning Disabled
- 43% of the LD population live at or below the poverty line

The BC Ministry of Education's (2002) definition of Learning Disabilities is quoted in this program: "A number of conditions that might affect the acquisition, organization, understanding or use of verbal or non-verbal information." This general definition does little to help identify school children with learning disabilities, but it is a recognition that there are children—and adults—whose learning is impeded because their brains do not easily receive and/or communicate knowledge and thought in the linguistic patterns of academic instruction.

It is important to recognize that it is not only students with learning disabilities who find it difficult to learn through the medium of academic language. Many students from homes whose parents have little formal education, find it challenging because they are not familiar with the organization and assumptions of school language that they encounter for the first time when they begin kindergarten.

Aboriginal children, for example, have too often been misdiagnosed with having learning disabilities because of differences between the way they use language at home and at school.



My doctoral research with Aboriginal students who had dropped out of school revealed methods of instruction that helped them to understand how language is used in school by writing their own thoughts about what they knew from life experience and connecting it to what they were learning in the classroom (UBC, 1987, *The Discourse Performance of Native Indian Students*).

Many of the subjects in this study knew a lot about their family relations, communities, and cultural heritage, but all had difficulty learning in public school classrooms whether or not they had learning disabilities.

Some of the curriculum changes that are presently being implemented by the BC Ministry of Education will address the cross-cultural challenges faced by many Aboriginal students in our schools, but the Ministry has not yet addressed the need to provide adapted curriculum and methods of instruction for children with learning disabilities.

In fact, the Liberal government has resisted providing the support these children need since breaking its contract with teachers in 2002. After two teacher strikes and two back-and-forth BC Supreme Court appeals, it is now a waiting game to see



whether the Canadian Supreme Court will agree that teachers have the right to negotiate class size and composition.

Our Liberal (small-c conservative) BC government is proud of its record of having balanced budgets and expects to be re-elected on that record. Whether that expectation is justified remains to be seen. Most British Columbians care about fairness and expect our public schools to serve all children's learning needs.

Many of us are asking questions like: Why doesn't the BC budget allow for enough staffing to provide needed support for children with disabilities? How many



of the 70% of prisoners with learning disabilities weren't able to complete secondary school because they did not receive the support they needed? Is it really more cost-effective to have our public school failures in prison than to provide the support they need when they're children and youth? And what are the individual and social costs of this government's deafness to teachers' decades-long message that help is needed for children and youth with learning disabilities?

As citizens we are entitled to answers to these questions from BC's Minister of Education, the Honorable Mike Bernier. When we write to him we might suggest that if he wants to raise graduation rates above 80%, the government needs to find funding to give students with learning disabilities the support they need to complete secondary school. These children can be successful learners if they receive enough one-on-one support to acquire the most potent motivator, confidence gained through success.

Parents of children with learning disabilities shouldn't be left on their own to lobby for their children, and those children whose parents aren't confident about approaching schools, let alone school boards, should not be left on their own to flounder and eventually drop from sight, many of them unable to find employment and ending up on the wrong side of the law. Let's write those letters.

Even if you don't personally know anyone who is challenged with learning disabilities, you can imagine in your mind's eye the middle-aged prisoner whose whole demeanor brightened when he showed me that he had learned how to write his name, and finally had a legible signature.

Dr. Starla Anderson (Ed.D.) is a retired educator who tutors youth and adults with learning disabilities, and lobbies for more support for them in public school

60% of First Nation children on reserve live in poverty

Study reveals Canada's shameful Indigenous child poverty

OTTAWA—Indigenous children in Canada are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than non-Indigenous children, says a study released May 17 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

The study calculates poverty rates on reserves and in the territories—something never before examined. It disaggregates child poverty statistics and identifies three tiers of poverty for children in Canada:

1. The worst poverty is experienced by status First Nation children, 51% of whom live in poverty, rising to 60% for children on reserve. Child poverty rates on-reserve worsened between 2005 and 2010.2

2. The second tier encompasses other Indigenous children and disadvantaged groups. The children of immigrants suffer a child poverty rate of 32%, while racialized (visible minority) children have a poverty rate of 22%. Between these are found non-status First Nations children (30%), Inuit children (25%) and Métis children (23%).

3. The third tier consists of children who are non-Indigenous, non-racialized and non-immigrant, where the rate of 13% is similar to the OECD average.

"The shameful reality in Canada is that devastatingly high child poverty on reserves is getting worse, not better," says David Macdonald, senior economist with the CCPA. "Despite recent attempts at rec-

onciliation concerning abuse in residential schools, we are risking a new lost generation of Indigenous youth who are growing up in unconscionable poverty."

Among the study's findings:

• The poverty rate for First Nation children living on reserve is highest in Manitoba (76%) and Saskatchewan (69%) and lowest in Quebec (37%).

• When examined by city, Winnipeg, Regina, and Saskatoon have the highest Indigenous child poverty rates of 42%, 41%, and 39%, respectively. At 19%, Toronto has the lowest Indigenous child poverty rate.

• Ontario, where Attawapiskat is located, has an on-reserve child poverty rate of 48%, while across Hudson Bay in Quebec, the James Bay Cree have a rate of 23%.

"There has historically been a frustrating lack of data when it comes to Indigenous poverty in Canada," says Daniel Wilson, co-author of the report. "The Conservative government's decision to deprive reserves of adequate funding is clearly related to the increase in child poverty we have observed. It is our hope that measuring and reporting on these shameful levels of child poverty can help bring an end to policymaking in a void of information."

The study calls for immediate action on a poverty reduction plan for reserves that would: 1. report poverty rates on reserves

and in the territories; 2. improve direct income support; 3. improve employment prospects; and 4. begin to implement longer-term solutions.

"For Canada's youngest and fastest-growing population, it is critical that we come to terms with the ongoing crisis affecting Indigenous people and act immedi-

ately to help resolve it. The growth of Indigenous child poverty cannot be allowed to deprive another generation of opportunity," says Wilson.

Shameful Neglect: Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada is available on the CCPA website.

Hotdogs, Hamburgers and Horgan

A community event hosted by

Juan de Fuca New Democrats

Fun for the Whole Family

*a great BBQ

*games for kids

*dessert auction



Sunday, August 14
12 noon to 2:30 pm

Sooke Flats Campground



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

Mulcair welcomes official apology on the anniversary of the Komagata Maru

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair (Outremont) made the following statement on the anniversary of the Komagata Maru tragedy:

"Over a hundred years ago, 376 passengers boarded a Japanese steamship named Komagata Maru. Most of them were Sikhs from the Punjab region of India, searching for safety and a better life in Canada.

Instead of being welcomed when they arrived in Vancouver, they were refused entry. The ship remained in Burrard Inlet for two months while the passengers were refused basic necessities, like food and water, before all but 20 were sent back to India.

Let's be clear: The Komagata Maru wasn't just an "incident"—it was the result of racist and discriminatory laws, much like the Chinese Head Tax, designed to exclude entire groups of people from Canada.

These policies did immeasurable harm. When the ship arrived in Calcutta, police fired on the passengers. Nineteen people were killed. Many more were imprisoned and persecuted.

New Democrats have a long and proud history of standing with the South Asian community in Canada and fighting for justice for the victims.

Four years ago, our former colleagues, Jasbir Sandhu and Jinny Sims, moved a motion in Parliament calling for an official apology for the Komagata Maru. Despite a nation-wide petition campaign that collected thousands of signatures, our motion was voted down by the government of the day.

After years of struggle, we welcome the long-awaited official apology from the Prime Minister in the House of Commons today. This was a dark chapter in the history of a country that has come to recognize diversity and inclusion as a great strength.

While the healing and reconciliation



NDP Leader Tom Mulcair

can now truly begin, we owe it to those who were turned away to do more than just apologise. We must ensure that this kind of tragedy can never again be repeated.

That's why New Democrats will continue to fight for a more welcoming Canada—where diversity is celebrated, families can reunite with loved ones, and the most vulnerable are given refuge in their time of need."

NDP: Alberta needs more than a Liberal federal cabinet meeting

While the Liberal federal cabinet holds private meetings with high-paid consultants at in the comfort of Kananaskis, many

Albertans are being left behind by the decisions of the Liberal government.

"What Albertans want the Liberals to be discussing while in Alberta is the actions the federal government could be taking to support the thousands of laid off workers," said Linda Duncan, NDP MP for Edmonton Strathcona. "Many Albertans are also wondering why this government continues to deny them equal access to the employment insurance they paid into."

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley has said the exclusion of Edmonton and surrounding area workers from expanded EI benefits is both "unfair" and "makes no sense".



Murray Rankin
Member of Parliament
Victoria

Constituency office:
1057 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8V 3K5
250-363-3600
Murray.Rankin@parl.gc.ca

Office hours:
Tuesday to Friday
10am to 4pm



Alistair MacGregor
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
COWICHAN-MALAHAT-LANGFORD

Duncan Office: 101-126 Ingram St
Langford Office: 3202B Happy Valley Rd
Phone: 1-866-609-9998
Email: alistair.macgregor@parl.gc.ca
alistairmacgregor.ca

Get big money out of politics!

By Alistair MacGregor

Our voting system is the foundation of our democratic institution, but for too long we have elected governments using an antiquated first-past-the-post system which gives a majority of the power to a party that wins a minority of the votes.

The NDP has advocated for a switch to a proportional representation system for decades. We want to create a voting process where every single vote counts and the makeup of the House of Commons accurately reflects the voting intentions of the Canadian public.

We were encouraged to hear the talk from the Prime Minister during the election campaign that the Liberal party was also ready to move towards a fairer process. He famously declared that 2015 would be the last election contested under first-past-the-post. As always with the Liberals, the devil is in the details.

Seven months after taking office, the government is finally ready to begin the reform process, and early indications have been highly disappointing. We've heard ministers and senior Liberals speak publicly about their preference for a system that uses ranked ballots. Ranked ballots would not address the fundamental problems inherent in the first-past-the-post model and would only serve to benefit the big parties. A study by ThreeHundredEight.com suggests that the Liberal party in particular would benefit most from such a system, and had the last election been conducted using ranked ballots, the Liberals would have won an additional 40 seats. Make no mistake, we will fight any attempts to reform the election process that so clearly benefits only one party.

In recent days, the Liberals have announced the composition of the special House of Commons' committee that will study electoral reform. The 10-member committee will be made up of six Liberal MPs, three Conservatives, and one New Democrat. The Bloc Québécois and the Greens will be allowed to have one member each sit on the committee, but they will not be allowed to vote.

This committee structure ensures that the Liberals maintain their false majority and wield total decision-making power over the future of our electoral system, effectively ensuring that their preferred model is the final recommendation of the committee.

Back in February, my NDP colleague and our party's Democratic Reform Critic, Nathan Cullen, had proposed a committee structure whereby membership would be allocated proportionally based on the popular vote results in the last election. Nathan's 12-member committee would have

featured five Liberal MPs (including the chair of the committee, who doesn't vote), three Conservatives, two New Democrats, and one each for the Greens and Bloc, all with full voting rights. Such a structure would result in a fair assessment for potential reforms, make sure all voices are heard, increase the likelihood of a collaboratively determined set of reforms and guard against changes that benefit only the governing party. No one party could dictate the end result.

Instead the Liberal government decided to ignore our recommendations. By stacking the deck on the committee in their favour, the legitimacy of the committee's study and their final recommendations will be called into question.

The government owes it to Canadians to get this process right. This issue transcends party politics and interests. Reforming the system by which Canadians elect their government, the bedrock of our democracy, must be done by taking the best interests of Canadian voters and the integrity of the system to heart.

On the same note, the current political climate represents an opportunity to get big money out of politics and level the playing field for all parties. I have introduced legislation in the House of Commons that would limit the length of an election campaign to 46 days. We all remember how the 2015 election started: Stephen Harper called the

election in early August with a voting day in October. This resulted in an unprecedented 79-day election campaign, the longest in Canadian history. It was also the costliest. The campaign cost taxpayers \$433 million, over 50% more than the 2011 campaign.

Most importantly, the length of the campaign meant that candidates and parties could spend more money on self-promotion, as the election spending limits are tied to the number of days in the campaign. This inherently benefits the rich parties and their wealthy donors, and disadvantages smaller parties.

I want to make sure that this does not happen again. My bill would ban these prolonged election campaigns and ensure that the small parties can compete financially with the wealthy.

We can't allow a system in which elections can essentially be bought through overwhelming media saturation, robo-calls and constant attack ads. I invite you to join in my campaign to get big money out of politics. Write your MP and tell them to support my bill.

Alistair MacGregor is the MP for Cowichan-Malahat-Langford. You can reach his office at 1-866-609-9998 or online at alistairmacgregor.ca.

NDP alarmed as Liberals approve GM salmon

OTTAWA—New Democrats are alarmed by the Liberal government's announcement that it has approved genetically modified salmon for sale and consumption in Canada.

AquAdvantage Salmon are genetically modified to grow twice as fast as conventionally farmed salmon. With this announcement, Canadians will be faced with the world's first GM food animal with absolutely no requirement to label this product as genetically modified.

"Canadians are concerned about GMO products, so there's no question that these products ought to be clearly labelled to ensure consumers can make an informed choice about purchasing and eating them. I'm disappointed that Health Canada has declined to do so," said NDP Health Critic Don Davies (MP Vancouver Kingsway).

"It's a matter of basic consumer information. If these products are indeed safe, then the producers ought to have no problem providing this information," said Davies. NDP Fisheries and Oceans Critic Fin Donnelly (MP, Port Moody-Coquitlam) is worried about the impact this decision could have on already endangered wild Atlantic salmon.

"If this company is allowed to grow genetically modified salmon and any of these fish escape into the wild, the damage to the wild Atlantic salmon population could be irreversible," he said. "Why would the government risk our wild salmon so a single company can profit?"

Cancel military equipment deal to Saudi Arabia

Peace and human rights organizations renewed their call on the Trudeau government to rescind export permits for the sale of Canadian-made, light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia, perhaps the most repressive regime on Earth.

In an open letter in April to the PM, Amnesty International, Project Ploughshares and the Rideau Institute decried the \$15 billion arms deal, saying it breaks both the spirit and the letter of Canada's export controls and international laws.

Prime Minister Trudeau has maintained that cancelling the deal, brokered by the previous Conservative government in 2014, would harm Canada's trade reputation and cost jobs at home.



Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke MP Randall Garrison (right) is joined by Esquimalt-Royal Roads MLA Maurine Karagianis (centre) and Victoria-Beacon Hill MLA Carole James in the 2016 Earth Day Walk in Victoria.

NDP forces reversal on Liberal power grab

OTTAWA – New Democrats welcome the Liberal government's decision to reverse their latest attempt to strong-arm Parliament.

In mid May, Liberals introduced Motion 6, a motion that if passed, would have robbed MPs of many of the tools they use to do their work and represent Canadians. In an unprecedented show of unity the opposition parties joined together in pressuring the government to reverse their decision.

"This was a power grab, plain and simple," said NDP House Leader MP Peter

Julian. "After promising 'Sunny Ways' and working with other parties, Liberals were ready to go further than any government before and put a straitjacket on parliament."

New Democrats have called for the government to go beyond today's reversal by ending the use of time allocation motions to force legislation through without the necessary debate. They have also asked the government to stop rejecting constructive amendments to legislation and end the majority Liberal control in their staked

Gender pay gap grows over span of career

Women in Ontario, Canada's most populous province, earn an average of \$36,000 a year to men's \$51,000 – for an average gender pay gap of 29.4 percent. This is according to a new report by the Centre for Policy Alternatives, and is based on 2013 Statistics Canada income data including full- and part-time work, self-employed and paid employment.

Even among the best paid 10 percent of women who earn an average of \$109,000 a year, the earnings shortfall is 37 percent less than top earning men, or \$64,000 a year. Over a 35-year career, that amounts to \$2.24 million less.

In every category – even female-dominated fields such as health care – women's average annual earnings are less than men's pay.

Sales and service – Women's earnings: \$18,600; Men's earnings: \$36,000; Gender pay gap: 48 percent.

Health care – Women's earnings: \$47,000; Men's earnings: \$75,000; Gender pay gap: 37 percent.

All industries with data for women also reveal a gender pay gap. The biggest disparity is in real estate and leasing, where

women earn \$27,000 to men's \$59,000, resulting in a gender pay gap of 54 per cent.

Even though the majority of post-secondary degree holders are women and they are moving into professions once dominated by men, their average annual earnings still lag behind those of men.

Graduate degree – Women's earnings: \$62,000; Men's earnings: \$85,000; Gender pay gap: 27 percent.

The gender pay gap persists throughout the life cycle, steadily growing as women get older.

Age 15-24 – Women's earnings: \$10,300; Men's earnings: \$13,400; Gap: 23 percent.

Age 55-64 – Women's earnings: \$40,000; Men's earnings: \$65,000; Gap: 38 percent.

So, what's the lesson here? It's not that male workers are paid more at the expense of women workers. It's that women are paid less by the bosses, and the difference is pocketed by the owners. The pay gap will be closed, and all forms of discrimination will end, when the working class, pushed by women and other oppressed social layers, unites and takes up the struggle for equality and socialism. -- B.W.

Big surge in corporate cash sent to offshore tax shelters

Canadian corporations and individuals increased four-fold the amount of money they transferred into tax havens last year. They poured almost \$40 billion into the tropical islands and European jurisdictions that hide funds from Canadian taxes, new statistics show.

According to Dennis Howlett, executive director of Canadians for Tax Fairness, citing foreign direct investment numbers from Statistics Canada, said that the total amount of wealth held in the 10 most popular tax havens now sits at \$270 billion.

In 2015, \$13 billion went to the Cayman Islands, \$9 billion to Barbados, and nearly \$8 billion to the Bahamas. Money sent to

Switzerland jumped up by 58 percent over the previous year.

The recent Panama Papers investigations conducted by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists exposed the shady world of offshore tax havens. Scores of reports have shown how illicit money mingles with cash kept out of the reach of tax collectors in a network of shell companies that hide their owners' true identities.

"Tightening corporate taxes is something the (Trudeau) government hasn't shown that it's willing to do", Howlett said.

Better to run a huge deficit than to tax the rich, evidently.

Medically assisted dying Bill C-14 is flawed

By Randall Garrison

Bill C-14 is the Liberal government's response to the Supreme Court ruling that the absolute prohibition on medical assistance in dying was unconstitutional and infringed on the rights of Canadians.

Recognizing the complexity and sensitivity of the issue, my New Democrat colleagues and I decided to vote freely, rather than as a caucus, on Bill C-14. Given the legal, ethical and social complexities of assisted dying, we each took the time to reflect, listen to our constituents and make our own decision on the matter.

Unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity to vote on Bill C-14 on May 4, because the Liberal government moved the second reading vote from May 9 to May 4 at the last minute. I was already en route back to Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke from a defence committee meeting with NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command), which I attended as the NDP's Defence Critic. The date for the second reading vote on Bill C-14 was changed while I was mid-air, headed in the wrong direction.

Had I been present in the House in May 4, I would have voted against Bill C-14.

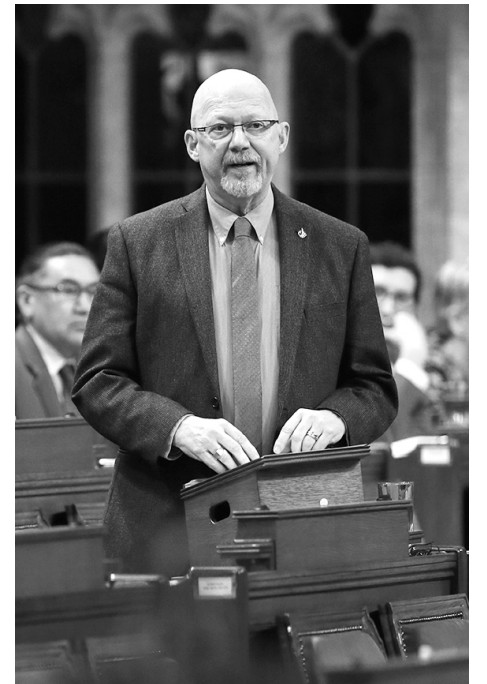
In February 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that "a competent adult person who clearly consents to the termination of life and has a grievous and irremediable medical condition, including an illness, disease or disability, that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her conditions" must be provided with the option of medical assistance in dying.

Bill C-14 fails to fulfill this in several ways. Notably, medically assisted dying will only be available to Canadians whose death is already "reasonably foreseeable", whatever that means, and Bill C-14 also fails to allow for advance consent, meaning those suffering from conditions like dementia will be unable to obtain assistance in dying, even if they clearly stated their wishes while still competent.

By restricting medically assisted dying to those who's conditions are already terminal and failing to provide for advance consent, Bill C-14 does not fulfill the requirements of the Supreme Court decision, and it is my belief that it does not protect the Charter 7 rights of Canadians.

As it is for many people, assisted dying is deeply personal for me. My mother died last fall. She suffered from dementia, among other things and wished to give consent for assistance in death in advance, before her dementia got so bad that she would no longer be able to do so. Indeed, by the time her other conditions progressed towards her eventual decline, my mother was no longer competent. As a family, that left us in a very difficult position, knowing her clear desire to seek assistance in dying in order to avoid a prolonged decline but unable to help her receive such a service.

As it stands, Bill C-14 would still preclude people like my mother, including several of my constituents who are currently



MP Randall Garrison speaks in the House of Commons on the legal, ethical and social complexities of Bill C-14, on medically assisted dying.

struggling with this dilemma, from accessing medical assistance in dying. As a result, I cannot support the Liberals' bill.

My colleague from Victoria, Murray Rankin, submitted an amendment to Bill C-14 that would have provided for advance requests for assistance in dying. Murray's proposed amendment would have allowed people suffering from degenerative diseases such as dementia and Alzheimer's to request medically assisted death in advance, before their conditions have progressed to the point that they are no longer able to give consent.

Murray's amendment was rejected by the Liberal-dominated Justice Committee, as was an NDP proposal to take out the stipulation that a patient's death already be reasonably foreseeable, which is not a condition of the Supreme Court decision.

Because I know first-hand, as well as from my constituents here in Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke, the need for provisions that allow for advance requests for assistance in dying, I do not support Bill C-14.

In drafting this legislation, the Liberals ignored the right to assistance in dying, as clearly established in the Supreme Court Carter decision, and the recommendations of the House of Commons Special Committee.

It is disappointing to have to vote against the Liberals' bill, when I remain such a strong advocate of Canadians' right to establish control over their own lives as the end of life draws near. However, it is important to remember that if this bill is defeated, the Carter decision, which fully guarantees the rights of Canadians to access assistance in dying, will become law.

Randall Garrison is the MP for Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke.



Our constituency office has a new location at 2904 Tillicum Road, corner of Tillicum and Gorge.

We look forward to continuing to help constituents with federal government departments, programs and services.

Randall Garrison, MP ESQUIMALT-SAANICH-SOOKE

2904 Tillicum Road, Victoria, BC V9A 2A5 / M-Th, 10-4 or by appointment
250-405-6550 / Randall.Garrison@parl.gc.ca / www.randallgarrison.ndp.ca



MLA Report:

Making affordable and accessible housing a priority

By Carole James

Affordability and accessibility of housing are pressing issues in our community, and government must do more to help. With a vacancy rate that is nearly zero, rents going up, renovations and skyrocketing housing prices driven in part by speculation, Greater Victoria is facing a housing crisis.

This year we've seen a spike in market prices for property around Victoria. A report released by VanCity Credit Union in May found that young families living in our city have the third lowest amount of money left over each month after paying for essentials of any major centre in Canada.

Homelessness is a complex challenge that demands a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. The tent city on the courthouse lawn is a symptom of a problem that has been allowed to grow for years. The core of this issue is a lack of safe, affordable housing and supports for vulnerable citizens who need them most.

The 2016 Point In Time Count Report counted 1,387 homeless individuals in Greater Victoria in February. Temporary shelter beds don't begin to address the number of homeless, and shelter beds are not homes. Winter shelter spaces are put in place, and when these temporary shelters close for the season, people who relied on them are thrown back out on the street.

As someone who has lived in Victoria for most of my life, I have seen the challenges first hand. The mixed neighbourhoods of my childhood, with affordable housing for seniors and families and a range of houses for those with a range of incomes, are disappearing.

Rental units aren't being built. Social-housing lists are years long, and conflicts in our downtown and community parks are growing.

To answer the challenges of homelessness, we need a long-term affordable housing strategy and proper supports. Not-for-profit organizations, faith groups, downtown businesses and citizens have stepped up to meet the challenge, but they need help.

All orders of government — municipal,

provincial and federal — have a role to play. I appreciate the most recent investments by the provincial government in funding additional shelter spaces, transitional housing units, and other short-term actions. After years of underfunding, however, these measures simply aren't enough to meet the urgent needs in the community, and are interim measures rather than long-term solutions.

Now is the time for governments to make a significant investment in long-term housing solutions to ensure that everyone has access to safe and secure housing, and to ensure that situations like the tent city do not happen again.

It will take all of us to turn this around. Our community is already working hard, with a solutions-oriented focus for the long-term. What might that include? Micro-housing, co-op housing and incentives for construction of affordable rental housing are important. So, too, are improving supports for people struggling with addiction and mental-health issues.

We need to develop good-neighbour agreements and provide clear channels for addressing challenges and concerns as they arise. All have a right to feel safe and supported in our communities.

We need tools for progress such as a province wide poverty-reduction plan with clear and measurable targets, tighter regulations to prevent real-estate shadow flipping, and a tax on speculation. Revenues from any speculation tax should go directly to build affordable housing.

This isn't easy work, and we won't solve the problem overnight. No approach will satisfy everyone, but we need to move forward by listening respectfully to each other.

We must communicate and work collaboratively towards solutions that will address the needs of our vulnerable citizens and those being squeezed by the housing affordability crisis. I am confident we can do it together, and I am committed to that work.

Carole James is MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill. Her Constituency office is located at 1084 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 3K4. Phone her at 250.952.4211.



Pictured at a public forum on the provincial budget, held in the Cook Street Village Activity Centre March 29, are (left to right) co-host Rob Fleming, MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake, economist Dr. Bob Gillezeau, social policy expert Dr. Michael Prince, TAPS executive director Kelly Newhook, and co-host Carole James, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill.

MLA Report:

2016 BC Budget impacts individuals and families

By Rob Fleming

It's been a busy and productive spring in my Victoria-Swan Lake constituency and in the BC Legislature. I have been advocating on local needs in our community to build more affordable housing, improve public transit, and reduce wait times in hospitals and help my constituents without a family doctor.

As the Official Opposition's spokesperson for Education I've been working with families and communities across BC to save good schools and ensure our kids don't lose learning supports vital to their success.

In February, the Christy Clark government tabled their 2016 BC Budget. MLA Carole James and I held a public forum to talk about how that budget impacts individuals and families in our community. The forum featured a panel of speakers: Kelly Newhook from the Together Against Poverty Society as well as UVic's Rob Gillezeau, Department of Economics, and Michael Prince, Professor of Social Policy.

We discussed how the monthly cost of Medical Service Premiums (MSP) had been hiked up again. While other provinces have scrapped this regressive tax altogether, British Columbians are now paying over \$1,800 per year in premiums. As participants said at the forum, it's simply not fair that a person making \$40,000 pays the same amount as a person earning \$400,000. Yet that's exactly what happens.

I was pleased to see government respond to broad pressure to finally increase funds for social workers who protect vulnerable children and youth. British Columbians receiving disability assistance also saw an increase for the first time in 10 years. But sadly — and cynically — they had their provincial bus pass subsidy removed at the same time, leaving many without transportation and no further ahead to deal with the high cost of living (surviving, as many would put it) in BC today.

As the Opposition's spokesperson for Education, I've had the chance to speak with people here and across the province about the profoundly important social and economic value of public education. At demonstrations, school board meetings, and in the legislature, John Horgan and I have been pressing the government to restore investment in BC's K-12 education system — which has fallen from the 2nd best funded province in the country to 2nd worst under this government.

As the impacts of a struggling school system are felt across the province, I have been advocating with BC parents, teachers and trustees who want what is best for our kids. I have been supporting parents

in Osoyoos who are trying to keep their town's only high school open, working with Vancouver parents and trustees who are faced with a \$25 million budget shortfall, and advocating to stop school closures and program cuts in Armstrong, Penticon, Quesnel and the Comox Valley.

I will keep calling on the government to stop taking away our children's opportunity to learn and grow in a supportive school system. We all benefit when our young people are given the skills and support they need to do well. Our province cannot have a sustainable and prosperous future without the next generation of skilled professionals, workers, entrepreneurs and researchers contributing to a dynamic and diverse economy.

Locally, many initiatives have reminded me of the creativity in our community. I recently recognized in the Legislature Reynolds Secondary's remarkable "Youth Echoing Truth" project, which allowed students to work with the Royal BC Museum to design exhibits about local histories. I was also delighted to add my congratulations to a number of Victoria-Swan Lake businesses that were recognized by the Chamber's Greater Victoria Business Awards.

Other memorable events (powered by committed citizens who volunteer their time and energy) include Vaisakhi at the Khalsa Diwan Sikh Temple, Oaklands' annual Easter celebrations, the Black History Month Community Recognition Awards, the Earth Walk for Peace and the Planet, and Quadra Village Days.

If you want to connect about an event or initiative, share your concerns about our children's education, or discuss your experience with government programs, my office is here to help. Stop by sometime to say hello and meet my exceptional constituency staff, Will Maartman and Robyn Spilker. While new to my office, Will and Robyn both have a wealth of experience working in the community. Please don't hesitate to call or write us.

Rob Fleming is Member of the Legislative Assembly for Victoria-Swan Lake; his office can be found at 1020 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC V8T 2A3. Phone him at 250-356-5013 or email him at rob.fleming.mla@leg.bc.ca.

Cowichan Valley reports

Cowichan Valley New Democrats welcomed BC NDP leader, John Horgan for a luncheon on May 24, and discussed the topics that are important to Cowichan residents.

There's always a receptive audience when Horgan visits Cowichan!

Carole James, MLA VICTORIA-BEACON HILL



Honoured to serve you in our community

1084 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K4
250-952-4211 / Carole.James.MLA@leg.bc.ca
www.CaroleJamesMLA.ca



MLA
Rob Fleming
Victoria-Swan Lake

Proud to be your MLA

1020 Hillside Ave.
250-356-5013
rob.fleming.mla@leg.bc.ca
robflamingmla.ca



British Columbians ready to take Big Money out of politics

Across the province, 86% of residents support a ban on corporate and union political donations

VANCOUVER – Voters in British Columbia believe corporations have outsized influence in determining government policy, thanks in part to unlimited political donations, a new poll by Insights West has found.

The online survey of a representative province-wide sample was sponsored by Dogwood Initiative, a BC citizen group calling on the province to “Ban Big Money” in politics. It found that 86% of British Columbians would support a ban on corporate and union donations before the next election, including 81% of BC Liberal voters and 91% who last voted for the BC New Democratic Party (NDP).

“The level of support for all of the ideas included in the questionnaire includes majorities of British Columbians and supporters of the province’s main political parties,” said Mario Canseco, vice president of public affairs at Insights West. “BC Liberals support a ban on corporate donations, and

New Democrats support a ban on union donations.”

British Columbia is the last large province in Canada to allow unlimited donations from anywhere in the world, including in municipal elections. Survey results suggest this has left the public deeply cynical about the position of ordinary citizens in democracy.

Respondents were asked to rank different groups based on how influential they seem to be in shaping policy in our province. Corporations were the clear winner with 47% of residents ranking them number one. Next came lobbyists, foreign investors and unions, with citizens in fifth place.

“By refusing to wean their parties off big money, Christy Clark and John Horgan are making the situation worse,” said Kai Nagata, communications director at Dogwood. “How can citizens trust either the Liberals or the NDP to make decisions in the public interest when they rely on cash

from construction unions, Alberta oil companies or foreign billionaires?”

Appetite for an overhaul of BC’s election financing laws is strong across the province. Only 10% of residents agreed with the statement: “Corporations and unions should be allowed to spend as much money as they want to help politicians win elections.”

In addition, 77% of British Columbians said it’s time for a ban on out-of-province donations and 76% said they would support a cap on personal contributions. Respondents who favour a cap were asked to name an annual limit for the amount a person should be able to donate to a political party. The average response was \$709, which is less than half the limit at the federal level.

Results are based on an online study conducted from April 18 to April 21, 2015, among 803 adult British Columbians. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for

age, gender and region in British Columbia. The margin of error, which measures sample variability, is ±3.5 percentage points for each sample, nineteen times out of twenty.

Vancouver City council voted May 3 on a motion to call for a referendum on political financing, as part of the next provincial election ballot in 2017. “Looking at these polling numbers, a referendum shouldn’t be necessary,” said Nagata. “But if provincial politicians dig in their heels, that may be the only way to force a change.”

Insights West is a progressive, Western-based, full-service marketing research company. It exists to serve the market with insights-driven research solutions and interpretive analysis through leading-edge tools, normative databases, and senior-level expertise across a broad range of public and private sector organizations. Insights West is based in Vancouver and Calgary.

Dogwood brings together everyday British Columbians to reclaim decision-making power over our environment and democracy. From trade deals to port reform, oil tankers to sustainable forestry, Dogwood has been helping local people stand up for their communities since 1999.



MLA Carole James and Official Opposition Spokesman for Housing MLA David Eby co-host a packed housing town hall March 17 at James Bay New Horizons. Residents from various apartment buildings in James Bay attended to discuss unscrupulous landlord practices and changes needed to the Residential Tenancy Act.



MLA Rob Fleming (left) joins Mavis DiGirolamo and Bill Corbin at the Earth Walk for Peace and the Planet.



As Official Opposition spokesman for Education, MLA Rob Fleming speaks at a public meeting about the high school closure in Osoyoos. He is working with families and communities across BC to save good schools and ensure children don’t lose vital learning supports .

Gary Holman statement on commemorative monument at Hospital Hill

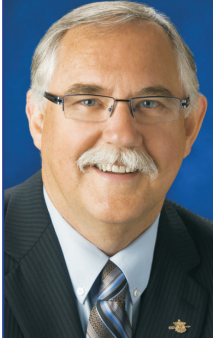
MLA for Saanich North and the Islands Gary Holman issued the following statement April 28 on the announcement of a commemorative monument at Hospital Hill in North Saanich:

“My congratulations to Airforce veterans, the Hospital Hill group, the Victoria Airport, and Victoria sculptor Illarion Gallant for this impressive commemorative monument to those brave Airmen and women who gave their lives at the Patricia Bay Air Station during WWII.

As the former home of medical facilities for the Royal Canadian Air Force Station at Patricia Bay, Hospital Hill is a fitting site for this memorial.

The Saanich Peninsula and the airport lands have a proud aviation history, and with today’s unveiling this tradition lives on. I hope our veterans, residents and visitors will be able to enjoy this very special place for many years to come.”

**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

Proudly
 Representing Esquimalt
Maurine Karagianis,
MLA
 Esquimalt-Royal Roads



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




John Horgan MLA Juan de Fuca
**Our Office is Open
 to Serve You**

#122-2806 Jacklin Road, Victoria BC V9B 5A4
 250-391-2801
john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca
www.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

True democracy – still a way to go

By David Olsen

In the heady period of euphoria following the October 2015 federal election it might be tempting to think that we are witnessing the dawn of a new golden time for democracy. Think again!

There is no doubt that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is trying to give it a good shot, despite some missteps and blunders, and things feel better than they were a year ago but events of the last few weeks show there is still a sour smile on the face of democracy.

Close to home, consider the parlous situation of the NDP and social democracy in Canada. The popularity free fall which began in the last weeks of the election campaign has not let up and public opinion polls seem to indicate that if an election were held now, the Liberals would win even

more seats, further decimating the Conservatives and reducing the NDP to a rump.

This despite the much publicized confrontation in the House of Commons on May 18 between the Prime Minister and a group of opposition MPs including Conservative Whip Gordon Brown, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair, NDP MP Ruth Ellen Brosseau and sundry other players on the stage of our national theatre (because that's what Parliament has become in the eyes of many Canadians).

Did the PM make a blunder by leaving his seat and trying to hurry people along? Certainly! Was the NDP playing silly games by preventing Gordon Brown getting to his seat? Yes. Did Mulcair, Brosseau, Conservative pit bull Peter Van Loan, Conservative Lisa Raitt *et al* indulge in over the top political grandstanding? Absolutely.

If the MPs standing on the floor had

not been deliberately slowing down parliamentary process, then the incident would not have happened in the first place. If the Prime Minister had not left his seat, there would have been no front page story, but Canadians would not have seen the childish behaviour which passes for government in the highest place of lawmaking in the land.

They would not have seen the cavalier attitude towards real issues facing Canadians such as assisted dying. (this came close to home the next day when CBC TV "National" ran the story of Noreen Campbell of North Saanich, who many readers of this newspaper know personally and who is denied the dignity of dying on her own terms by the proposed legislation).

As so often it was left to Elizabeth May to sound the voice of reason. Indeed the Prime Minister should not have intervened in the childish behaviour taking place, but the Speaker should have done – forcefully; the MPs involved should grow up; and as Ms May pointed out, any contact suffered by Ms Brosseau was accidental, not deliberate.

The PM has apologized, continually and profusely and it appears, genuinely; so it is time to move on, everyone hopefully having learned something along the way.

Also on the federal scene meanwhile, the issue of electoral reform for which so many Canadians had high hopes is running into troubled waters. The Conservatives, of course oppose it, and their various mouthpieces such as the *Globe and Mail* have joined the hue and cry for a referendum

"Our electoral system has served us well for 150 years," Conservative Senator Leo Housakos said in an interview with the *Globe and Mail*. "It isn't broke, so why bother making it such a big priority to fix it other than the fact that most of us are starting to believe that Mr. Trudeau thinks that by changing the electoral system it would keep them in power in perpetuity." This is all a bit rich coming from a member of the unelected, financially unregulated, privileged Red Chamber, whose members represent no-one but themselves and interests of the political hacks who appointed them to do their bidding and stymie the will of the people (as if the people really count – another myth in our broken democracy). He also forgot that for the first 52 of those years, women did not have the right to vote (provincially not until 1922 in PEI and, believe it or not, 1940 in Quebec) and until recently you had to be aged 21.

On CBC Power and politics the *Globe and Mail's* John Ibbetson repeated Housakos' words on "how well our system has served us for 150 years and how stable Canada has been". By the same logic, various despots throughout history could claim that their iron rule had provided stability, so why change it. It took 776 years of British stability to get from Magna Carta to the great reform bill of 1832 with its first grudging acknowledgement that a few men with property should be allowed to vote (and explicitly disenfranchised women) and almost another 100 years to extend the vote to all women over 21. Clearly the old ruling elite would have been quite happy with Senator Housakos' views!

The right wing press and commentators also gleefully point out that "Referendums on proposed electoral reforms in British Columbia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island all ended in defeat for the Yes side."

However they conveniently fail to mention that, but for the arbitrary bars set by the Campbell government in the 2005 referendum, BC would have changed the system; since in that year, 57.7% of the electorate voted in favour of reform, including a majority of voters in 77 ridings out of 79. It was the second (2009) referendum that was defeated, with 60.9% voting against the reform and 39.09% of voters supporting the change. That was almost certainly partly explained by voter exhaustion due to the odds being stacked against reform and right wing antipathy to it.

Despite the seemingly democratic idea of a referendum, electors need to be careful what they wish for. The Conservatives do not seek a referendum because the current gang are passionate defenders of democracy and the common man or woman. They see it as a way, with their huge corporate financial backing, of turning it into a partisan electoral campaign, accompanied by the usual half-truths or even downright untruths, in which reasoned debate and sober consideration go out the window. If we don't believe it, just look at the farce of the "Brexit" referendum in the UK which has degenerated into a campaign of who can spread the most fear about the outcome and turning it into a vote based on emotion and very little serious thought – particularly on the "leave" side. The Liberals, NDP and Greens all campaigned on the promise of electoral reform and got over 60% of the vote between them, so there is a fair bit of legitimacy for change.

The social democrat who wants to research more on the continuing democratic deficit might also consider BC Premier Christy Clark who thinks that there is nothing wrong with her having dinner at \$20,000 a time with the wealthy who want to bend her ear, or in collecting her large salary and expenses from the citizens taxes plus a handsome top up from the BC Liberal (i.e. neo-cons) Party to help her live the lifestyle to which she has become accustomed. She also continues to deny that there is anything wrong with unlimited corporate and union political donations. Meanwhile she and her government have failed dismally in their promise of a family doctor for everyone by 2015 – and have now reneged on it completely.

How many citizens will remember all this in May 2017 when they go to the polls? One thing is for sure – the NDP has got to come out swinging for the next 12 months and give people something to vote FOR, not just against.

Finally, our weary democrat should think about the Panama Papers which typifies the root cause of everything that is wrong with democratic (and undemocratic!) societies. Namely that if you are rich (remember the quotation "behind every great fortune lies a great crime") you can bend the rules to make yourself even richer, perpetuate atrocious inequality and let the other 90% of the population go hang. Except of course that one day, maybe not in our lifetimes, the system is going to implode and all sorts of people are going to go down with it – and probably what's left of democracy as well.

On that cheerful note, we should however still remember Tommy Douglas – "Courage my friends; tis not too late to build a better world." Except that we had better get a move on, since quite a few years have passed since he spoke those words.

Jordan Watters

Proud Trustee, Greater Victoria School District 61

Advocating for public education because investing in students is investing in the future.



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

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, BC V9A 7N7**

Victoria-Swan Lake New Democrats

**Stay in touch
with your executive**

**You can contact your president Trish Richards
at victoriaswanlakendp@gmail.com
or write to PO Box 282,
1681 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC V8T 2C1**

School bus service cut in Vernon

VICTORIA – Budget cuts imposed by local MLA Eric Foster and the BC Liberal government have forced the Vernon School District to cut important school bus services.

"Mr. Foster is plain wrong to tell his constituents -- parents and kids -- that cuts to school bus service has nothing to do with his government. The fact is, this cut has everything to do with the BC Liberals slashing \$54 million from school districts from the provincial budget," said Rob Fleming, the New Democrat spokesperson for education.

After a family in the Lumby area raised

concerns that their children have to be driven 17 kilometres to the nearest bus stop to get to school, Liberal MLA Eric Foster said, "parents need to contact the school district and not me."

The loss of rural school bus service and the impact it is having on our education system is the consequence of the «low-hanging fruit» that Premier Christy Clark suggested could be cut from already besieged school district budgets.

The BC New Democrats believe that parents and students deserve better than what they're getting from MLA Foster and his BC Liberal government.

Public money subsidizes private schools in BC: supporting inequality

By Diane McNally

As the year counts down to the next provincial election, voters need to be clear on changes needed to ensure K-12 public education in British Columbia thrives. It's clear that neglect of public goods, including public schools, in favour of privatization a la the UK "Innovation Unit", has been and continues to be the agenda of the BC Liberals. Regardless of the province's announcements of "highest funding ever", school trustees have noticed that expenses are highest ever as well, and many costs have been recently offloaded to school districts by the Ministry of Education.

Not only does BC subsidize private schools with public money – in February 2015, Premier Christy Clark named a new Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education for Independent Schools (private schools).

The road to privatization

The push to expand "choice" in BC public schools is the signpost pointing to Charter Schools and privatization. Specialty "Academies" already pull students from neighbourhood schools and charge fees within the public system, on occasion hiring non-union staff to deliver instruction. Where are the votes at public school board tables against the proliferation of "special" programs when they require more resources than "less special" classrooms? The immediately attractive "choice" scenarios may have long run negative consequences.

Underfunding public education sets up schools to compete against each other in the "choice" arena for the dollars that are attached to each student. There is no such thing as a "public good" in this ideology, only customers who go school shopping in the marketplace, and who respond to glitzy school promotion events every spring as public schools make desperate efforts to attract students away from their neighbourhood schools. Then some schools are left under capacity, subject to the sudden BC Liberal demand that schools operate at 95% capacity, unfolding in Vancouver, which allows the province to dictate that Boards close schools serving a temporarily small community of learners.

Niche schools (such as Academies) in the public system are exclusionary, with transportation out of their catchment area to a "program of choice" being highly problematic for some students. No student should have to leave their neighbourhood school to find excellence in fine arts, intellectual challenge, or any other interest. Parents should not have to go school shopping in a properly funded public education system.

Diverting public tax dollars to fund advantage (smaller class sizes for one) for a select group is obviously counter to the principle of equity and undermines the value of public education which is our society's most visible equity-based institution. Should schools that take public money have the right to screen out students based on academic performance or ability to pay? BC now has a two tier education system which has built in exclusion from opportunity based on income and parental ability to jump through the hoops for private school entry. Choice in this context is available only to those who are in a position to make one.

As well, private schools may require academic testing in order to get access, yet another exclusionary filter. That's why some of the elite university prep private schools (like St George's, the school the Premier's son attends) can say 99 to 100 percent of their graduates go to university.

Subsidizing private schools in BC with public money has been going on for more than 40 years. During the 1950s and 1960s, Socred premier W.A.C. Bennett refused to fund private schools with public money, but his son Bill changed that when he became premier, and instituted provincial funding

for private schools in 1977. There were 176 private schools in BC in 1969-70. In 2014-15, there were 350 private schools across the province, in 2014 registering 80,783 students. Public schools serve 552,788 students. In 2015, 13 percent of BC kindergarten to Grade 12 students were enrolled in independent schools.

Provincial (public) funding for private schools increased by 16.9% cent between 2005 and 2014, but increased by 45.6% in the 2014 provincial budget, taking money that the public system could use. Private schools in BC received almost \$315 million in provincial funding for the 2013-14 academic year, up from \$295 million in 2012-13 and \$251 million in 2009-10. This year, BC Libs gave \$358 million to private schools. If all planned funding increases go ahead for next school year, private school funding will have gone up by 93 percent since 2005.

In Alberta, private schools receive 70% of the per-student amount paid to public schools, the highest in Canada. Alberta has instituted Charter Schools as well, which began as an experiment in 1990, and which are funded as public schools. A recent Alberta poll indicated 61% of Albertans don't want public money supporting private schools. It would be interesting to see what the BC results would be. The Edmonton Public School Board sent a letter urging the Alberta NDP government to phase out the public subsidy for private schools and return that money to public school boards. Edmonton Public Schools Trustee Michael Janz said, "If a parent wants to choose a different program or educational journey, or even a boarding school, that is their right to choose and pay for themselves."

Private school funding categories

The Federation of Independent Schools Associations BC (voluntary school membership) has been operating for 50- years and represents schools which are religion-based schools, prep schools, schools for students with special needs and other independent schools. There are 350 independent schools in BC, with more than 80,000 students.

Enrolment is growing, particularly among the small schools that belong to the Associate Member Group, which makes up 25% of all independent school enrolment. Catholic schools account for about 27 percent, while two Christian associations account for about 31 percent combined. A smaller percentage includes Jewish, Muslim and Sikh and "other" religious schools. The remainder, about 16 percent, are in the Independent Schools Association, which emphasizes academic preparation.

Private schools are grouped into four categories in BC (full explanation on the Ministry of Education page "Classification of Independent Schools"), determined by the comparison of the independent school's average per student operating costs with the local School District's average per student operating grant amount. Group 1 gets 50 % of the local district's per-student grant amount. If the independent school's per student operating costs exceeds the district's per student grant amount, then the school is designated Group 2, which gets 35 % of the local district's per-student grant amount. The independent school grant can only be used to pay for operating expenses.

Group 1 schools employ BC-certified teachers, have educational programs consistent with Ministerial orders and provide programs that meet the learning outcomes of the BC curriculum. In 2012/13 and 2013/14, Group 1 Independent Distance Learning Schools received 63 % of the Distance Learning Public School flat rate. Group 2 schools meet the same requirements as Group 1 schools but are typically elite prep schools with high operating costs. Group 2 Independent DL Schools received 44.1 % of the DL Public School Flat rate. Group 3 schools are not required to meet the Group 1 requirements. Group 4

schools, for mainly non-provincial students, receive no funding.

Tuition

Some private school tuition can be claimed for a tax break. Tuition at a private school offering both academic and religious education may be eligible for a significant tax credit for tuition as a charitable contribution. If a school's facilities, equipment or personnel are required due to the student's mental or physical needs, the tuition can be claimed. A portion of fees that relate to child care services for students under age 16 may be deductible as a child care expense based on that portion of the day that involves supervision and is not related to academic instruction, such as lunchtime supervision.

Reportedly, some schools have set tuition amounts unusually low but "request a donation" to the school. Numerous CRA audits have resulted from this practice.

Funding

Every public school district receives a provincial per-student operating grant, plus additional amounts for unique student needs, some of which require a District school psychologist assessment of the student in order to qualify for a Ministry special education funding category placement, which may result in additional support, such as usually partial FTE of an education assistant. (See the Ministry page "Special Education Programs and Funding - Independent Schools" for special education grants to private schools.)

In a private school the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) eligible students enrolled is also a key component to calculating school grants. A full grant of public money is paid for each full-time student who is enrolled for a minimum of 600 hours from July 1 to May 15 of the school year. Partial grants of public money are paid for eligible partial FTE students who receive less than 600 hours of instruction.

Municipal Taxes

On the very last day of the BC Legislature's spring session, the BC Liberals tabled Bill 29, a Bill to prevent municipalities from charging private schools property tax. BC Liberal Finance Minister Mike de Jong was apparently concerned about the possibility of cities and towns applying property taxes on private schools' non-classroom facilities (classroom space is already tax-exempt). This is an unconscionable priority, given the significant challenges public school students, teachers and staff face from government underfunding.

In debate, Green MLA Andrew Weaver demanded that BC "treat independent schools the same as public schools" and ensure that there is "consistent treatment across the province with respect to the way independent schools are subjected to municipal property taxation". Weaver went on to explain that Bill 29 would allow private schools to claim not only the land immediately under a school building but other land as well - surrounding property, including fields, tracks, athletic centres, drop-off areas, parking lots and maintenance facilities. (The land underneath an actual private school building has been tax-exempt since 1957, under government legislation. Public schools are already tax-exempt.) Weaver continued: "In summary, then, first off I would like to recognize that we do have an outstanding education system. It does not help our education system when we continue to bemoan the problems in it instead of celebrating the successes in it. Sure, there are problems in our education system. There are problems in everything around us. But we will not move this education system forward if all we do is fixate on the negative that's in it. Secondly, I think fairness is critical. This bill provides fairness, recognizing that there are other provinces where independent schools, like the Catholic system, are actually part of the public system, whereas in BC we've never

had Catholic school boards."

What's the take-away? Don't identify problems, don't persist with calling attention to problems – like serious ideologically-driven underfunding? Institute an official religion-based (just Catholic, though) School Board?

Bill 29 was approved unanimously in the Legislature on September 30 and received Royal Assent on November 17, 2015. This means that all property that is reasonably necessary for providing an educational program equivalent to the public sector will now receive a statutory property tax exemption. Any additional lands, such as endowment land, holding property or adjacent land that is currently not used for instruction, may still be granted a permissive exemption from the municipality under the Community Charter, s 224, h.1, at the request of the independent school authority.

NDP critic Rob Fleming said the private school deal shouldn't occur during a time of funding cuts to public schools. "It's staggering to me that the government can award additional tax exemptions to private schools," he said. "It's a complete double standard to say public schools need to tighten their belts and slash programs while the government suggests we can afford more subsidies to private school."

In 2012, the City of Victoria overhauled its tax exemption policies, linking most private school tax exemptions to the level of provincial operating funds they receive, typically 50 percent. As allowed by the Community Charter which permits exemption from municipal taxes, the City of Victoria granted Glenlyon Norfolk School a 2014 tax exemption of \$41,028. (Attending Glenlyon for Grades 6 through 12 costs between \$16,040 and \$17,430 per year. In 2011, the school posted a \$986,631 surplus.)

Summary

Private school defenders claim they are helping the public system since private school customers still pay taxes for the public system, plus the extra costs for private school, sparing the public system the costs of 76,000 students. But the province is obligated to provide a free (becoming a joke, with school fees all over public schools) appropriate education for every student.

Both John Horgan and Rob Fleming, leader and education critic respectively for the BC NDP, have publicly approved of the funding status quo.

BC School Trustees (although the BCSTA has taken issue with government subsidies to private schools, did not unanimously vote in favour of an Alberni District trustee's motion to end public subsidies of private schools in BC, at the April BCSTA AGM. So some public school trustees are in favour of public subsidies to private schools. Isn't that some sort of conflict of interest from elected people whose mandate in the BCSTA Bylaws is to "represent the public interest in public school education"?)

Children have a right to an accessible, quality education that does not depend on family socioeconomic status. BC public schools struggle with provincially-imposed budget cuts and unexpected downloads, loss of staff and services, while the continuing transfer of critical public resources to the private sector continues.

Diane McNally serves as a school trustee for School District 61.

Your ad could be here!

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

1000 points of blight – an abuse of volunteerism

By Tim Pheotist

George Bush 41st US President -- famously enjoyed basking in the limelight of "1000 points of Light".

David Cameron – UK Prime Minister – loved to pronounce on his concept of the "Big Society" and his motto that "we're all in it together".

Stephen Harper – Canadian Prime Minister -- promoted "National Volunteer Week".

Pick any politico's platform and pitch. It's not necessary to Google too deeply to find vote hooks being baited and cast with appeals to the generous spirit of "Everyman".

Volunteer – it's good for the soul!
Give generously – it's good for society!

What could possibly be wrong with the selfless ideal of volunteering time, skill, resources and cash in support of a better life for all?

There is no question that our motives are sincere. We want to help and support those in need, and to play a tangible part in improving and lifting our communities and societies to a better place.

But somehow things aren't working. Once again our societal road, paved with good intentions, seems simply to be headed into something of a hellish hole.

It's time to look more closely at the conservative barb that has been wrapped in the supposedly curative sweet-meat of volunteerism.

The use of the term "volunteer" has come to represent everything that is "good" in modern, developed societies. There is no question that it is beneficial on a personal, social, practical and spiritual level to assist a neighbour, next door or on the street, with an urgent or difficult need.

But that neighbourly help does not create an overwhelming "economic good" for society.

In the closing decades of the 20th century and opening years of the 21st, developed societies have been subject to market based economic theories.

Models of trade growth have been presented. "Trickle Down Economics". The "Laffer Curve", "Rising Tides lifting all

ships", etc.

How quickly we have forgotten that the "Greed is Good" meme was ridiculed and disavowed in the 1980's. Businessmen and financiers actually went to prison for performing commercial acts that today seem to be criminally untouchable.

When it became clear that the punctured inflatable boats of Everyman and the "average family" were not rising with the economic tide, and were often actually sinking, market economists changed tack.

Now the solution to a dissatisfied populace was "Austerity economics". The message, delivered mostly by conservative politicians, was that the economic failures were fundamentally the fault of individual greed. Profligate borrowing. Unhealthy consumerism.

To cure the economy, consumerism must be curbed.

Really?? The economic global growth model is entirely based on consumption of private profit driven, commercial consumerism.

Today, most serious economists are shifting away from the idea of Austerity Economics. To say the least, it hasn't worked so well – Conservative and BC Liberal voters -- did you ever imagine it would? *Lower Island News* told you years ago that Austerity Economics was an antisocial trick. Unsurprisingly austerity policies have brought high unemployment, particularly in the younger generation segments of societies.

Even the boring economic tools of low interest rates and increased money supply have not provided the economic lubrication necessary to keep streets free of homeless citizens.

Austerity policies have brought high unemployment, which in turn brings civil unrest, homelessness, disease and social disintegration.

This is the result when private profit trumps – Trumps? – social investment.

So, the Austerity vote isn't so much fun for your local candidate to chase at the moment.

But, just like "haters gotta hate", "capital mongers gotta 'cumulate'". Bigger and bigger global capital groupings. Mostly these groupings are filled with the funds belonging to the workers of our civilized and de-

veloped societies. Many, in Canada are readers of *Lower Island News*!

So listen up! The bank accounts of Everyman and his/her family are struggling. There's no interest being paid on your lifetime savings. The pension isn't enabling many vacations. The Thrift and Dollar stores have never had it so good.

Is there anything left for the average oligarch to steal? Actually there is.

The theft, now, from our civil society is the theft of our time and labour.

Look at the job centre boards. Increasingly it's a race to the bottom. Thanks to the connection of the WWW we can see job market movements in most developed countries. There's no "there, there". And British Columbia is no exception.

Employers – if they actually exist – there are many phantoms on the job boards – can't rush quickly enough to offer minimum wage "opportunities". Remember, in BC, the minimum wage is the lowest in Canada. Even with the forthcoming, pitiful increase over the next two years, the BC minimum wage remains absurdly low.

But, perhaps, the final insult is the noticeable increase in "jobs" offered that are actually labelled "volunteer". No longer bothering with the ambiguous term "intern", to pretend that the employee deserves a pay packet, now, BC and Canadian workers can offer their time, skills and labour as volunteers" in the process of building private profits for any entity, other than your social neighbour.

This trend is an abuse of the volunteer tradition.

This trend is a theft of labour in the interest of private profit exploitation.

This trend is not an "Economic Good" as many politicians would like us to believe. By any modern progressive economic model, volunteerism is entirely regressive.

In the short term a corporate fiduciary duty may be served – reducing payroll costs as an element of profit maximization. Of course it's a complete nonsense but corporate boardrooms, large and small,

actually, seriously weigh this ludicrous, self serving approach, ceaselessly.

From the sweatshops of Asia to the boardrooms of Walmart, global corporations and capital groupings decry movements that would increase enforceable minimum wages.

The argument that increased wages destroys jobs has crumbled at every analysis. The service industry, as we know it, will not collapse if employees are paid enough to afford food, shelter, education and health-care.

It's low pay/no pay jobs that compel so many people to live on our streets in cardboard boxes.

Our civilized, developed society requires good hearted, properly trained, properly paid citizens who can develop and build the products and services that will enable care for youth, sick and elderly. That is the proper objective of any civilized economy and society.

Volunteered and free labour is a theft from such a society.

It's a hard truth but it's demonstrably true – "feel-good" volunteering, when the work is eliminating a legitimate pay packet, is not a good thing. It's not an "economic good".

Good economies are centred on plans to develop sustainable social structures. That doesn't happen when private profits and gains are diverted away from the creators – employees -- of those gains and where, gradually it becomes acceptable to devalue labour to the sweet poison of "volunteerism".

Don't be an unpaid "Point of Light" in a sinking economy. Don't bite on the barb of minimum wage. If you hear a political candidate hi-jacking the motives and benefits of volunteerism with sugared words of appreciation, turn away.

No sustainable society ever successfully survived on the backs of unpaid labour – and that unpaid labour includes that of the well-meaning volunteers among us.

Comprehensive approach needed to fix Metro Vancouver housing crisis: study

Vancouver -- A new study finds Metro Vancouver's growing housing affordability crisis is widening the gap between the rich and poor, and requires a multi-pronged response that would restrict absentee ownership, increase affordable housing supply for both new owners and renters, and make property taxes fair.

"The housing crisis is top of mind for most people," says Marc Lee, an economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and author of *Getting Serious About Affordable Housing*. "The government has recommended some small measures to track foreign ownership and combat shadow flipping. But this will have little to no impact on the overall crisis. Simply put, the housing market is broken, and to fix it we need a comprehensive approach."

Lee's study finds that the top 20% of households hold 70% of the net worth of principal residences. He says the provincial government should move quickly to restrict outside money that is distorting the local housing market.

"Vancouver is just one of the global cities where investors are using real estate to park their wealth – not as a place to live. We need to make sure that our housing supply is for people who live in and contribute to our local economy."

In addition to cooling external demand, Lee calls for public investments of \$1.25 to \$2.5 billion per year to build 5,000 to 10,000 units of affordable housing, with a focus on cooperative and social housing. Most of this upfront cost would be repaid over time through rent. He also recommends exploring affordable ownership models, where

there are limits on resale prices. Whistler has greatly increased housing availability and affordability for local workers with such measures.

"We need about 5,000 new units of affordable non-market housing per year just to keep pace with demand. And more if we want to address the backlog, from thousands of homeless people to the estimated 145,000 households who spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing."

Lee outlines a series of proposed reforms to the current property tax and property transfer tax to cool speculation, reduce inequality and provide funds for the recommended investments in housing.

He points to models like London, England, where the government has made its property transfer tax steeply progressive and added an additional transfer tax on purchases by non-resident buyers and of second homes and rental properties. Combined, these reforms could raise significant new revenues to finance an ambitious social housing built-out, while also making the property tax system more progressive.

"The surge in real estate prices has further increased the gap between rich and poor, creating profits for homeowners that are more like lottery winnings than a reward for hard work," says Lee.

"For those at the higher end of the real estate market, those winnings should be taxed so we can build the affordable housing we need."

Getting Serious About Affordable Housing: Towards a Plan for Metro Vancouver is available at www.policyalternatives.ca/fix-housing.

Victoria Federal New Democrats

Stay in Touch

with your executive
To contact president James Coccola
email president@victoriandp.ca
Visit our website at www.victoriandp.ca

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.

5,000 pairs of McGregor socks arrive for Victoria's homeless

On Friday, March 4 at 9 a.m., Rabbi Harry Brechner, Cool Aid's Don McTavish and Avodah volunteers began distributing a new shipment of 5,000 pairs of McGregor socks to people who are homeless and in extreme poverty in Victoria. The socks giveaway was launched at Congregation Emanu-El, 1461 Blanshard Street.

This latest offering brings to over 60,000 the number of pairs of socks donated by McGregor Socks (Toronto) for Victoria's homeless since 2007.

This extraordinary ongoing generous gift of socks has occurred annually since 2007, thanks to a partnership begun by Avodah, the social action group of Congregation Emanu-El.

Due to the many communities McGregor Socks now supports, McGregor this year asked Avodah to cover a nominal cost per pair. In response, Avodah, together with partner Cool Aid, joined forces with other members of the community to ensure that we were again able to provide socks

for those in need in Victoria.

Thanks to the generosity of La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries, Megson-FitzPatrick Insurance, MP Murray Rankin, Michael and Christine Bloomfield, law firms Cook-Roberts and Wadell-Raponi, and accounting firm Hutcheson and Co., thousands of quality McGregor's socks were again being warmly welcomed by people on the streets of Victoria.

The 5,000 pairs of socks were given to people who are homeless and at risk by 28 local social service agencies that work together to help these people in need, including AIDS Vancouver Island, Anawim House, Beacon Out of the Rain Youth Shelter, Boys & Girls Club, Burnside Gorge Community Association, CARTS, Congregation Emanu-el, Cool Aid Community Health Clinic, Dandelion Society, Mustard Seed / Hope Farm, Human Exchange Society, James Bay Community Project / Youth Clinic, Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter, Native Friendship Centre, Our Place, Out

of the Rain Youth Shelter, Pacifica Housing Services, PEERS, Rainbow Kitchen, REES Network (Cool Aid), Salt Spring Island Community Services, Salvation Army, Single Parent Resource Centre, Sandy Merriman / Next Steps (Cool Aid), Seasonal Shelter, Rock Bay Landing Shelter (Cool Aid), Threshold Society, VARCS Mobile X Van, Victoria EWP Program.

Congregation Emanu-El consists of a diverse group of 190 families who come together to create a dynamic and spiritual expression of Jewish life. It's a place of love and connection where deep friendships are forged and nourished. They believe in connecting people to one another and to their Jewish roots and traditions, as well as nourishing feelings of connectedness, security and belonging within the entire capital community. Avodah is Congregation Emanu-El's social action group, created to serve those in most need in Victoria, particularly poor and homeless youth, adults and families.

The Victoria Cool Aid Society builds homes, lives and community. It creates opportunities for people who are homeless or living in poverty. It makes a difference through housing, health care, support and emergency shelters. Founded in 1968, Cool Aid helps over 9,000 people in the Capital Region every year, at 15 locations in Langford, Victoria and Saanich. The Society's major campaign is "Help End Homelessness", to build an additional 360 apartments for people in the community who have no home -- including Mount Edwards Court and Cottage Grove. #buildhomes

By keeping to a set of core principles that include expertise in design, marketing, global sourcing and distribution, McGregor Industries continues to grow and today is comprised of three subsidiaries: 1) McGregor Socks - Canada; 2) American Essentials - The United States; 3) American Essentials International - Europe, South America, Mexico, Middle East, Asia and Oceania.

"Souls" of people living in poverty on display at Main Vancouver Library

Little flags, in their hundreds, written by people living in poverty, were part of a display designed to make poverty visible so it will become an issue in the next election. The display was at the Main Vancouver Public Library on Georgia Street. The flags had words and images written by people from across the province about what it's like to live in poverty and why welfare and disability rates should be raised.

The flags were strung up February 29 and were there for two weeks.

"The flags were made by community members from across BC," Trish Garner of the Poverty Reduction Coalition told a news conference that launched the flags into public view.

"Safe, secure Housing that is affordable," says one flag.

"I don't know that people know how low welfare rates are," said Joanne Shaw of Raise the Rates. People on disability only get \$906, and people on straight welfare \$610. Rates should be doubled. Write letters and make it an election issue," said Shaw.

"Standing in line-ups becomes a way of life," said another flag.

"\$610 is not enough to pay the rent and eat," explained Fraser Stuart who was on



Two of many little flags written by people living in poverty, on display at Vancouver Public Library.

welfare for three years. "As a result of not eating and sleeping properly I now have a heart condition and stomach problems that are costing the health care system."

"Sharing the wealth with others = love," said another flag.

"Our kids are going hungry," said Victoria Bull, simply.

"Good thing I like peanut butter," said another flag.

"Helping people is the proper thing for government to do, added Fraser Doke, who is on disability with HIV and a transplanted liver. Doke is the one who called the flags,

the "soul of the people".

"Welfare rates, they are in despair. Help us increase the rates PLEASE," said another flag.

"Living on welfare is very, very bad for your health," added Harold Lavender, a man who was on disability for nine years with no increase.

"Christy Clark, you should open your eyes, ears, and especially your heart," said another flag.

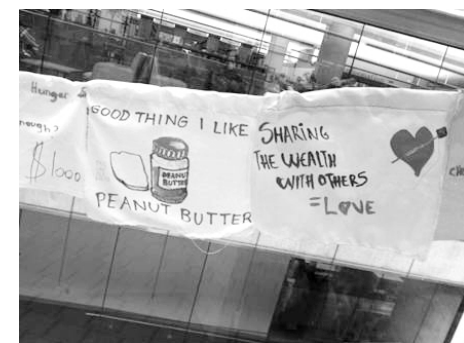
"I can't believe that Clark is announcing that we're getting an increase when she is taking the bus pass away," said Colleen Boudreau, a single mother on disability.

"FOOD" said another flag.

"The banners give voice to the poverty that is BC," said Bill Hopwood of Raise the Rates. The government's excuse that "we can't afford to tackle poverty is a lie." Hopwood cited statistics such as the government giving \$226 million in tax cuts to the rich last year and \$41,000 a year in tax cuts to the rich since 2000. "Poverty is a political choice," said Hopwood.

"Christy Clark has 2 given to the rich but has not given 2 the poor," said another flag.

Holding up a flag that says, simply, "See me," Garner said the display could help the public see people for who they are, "not the



Flags describe what it is like to live in poverty, and why welfare and disability rates are too low.

stats, not the myths."

The display was at the Vancouver Central Public Library on Georgia Street. until March 12.

Readers can contact Trish Garner of the Poverty Reduction Coalition at trish@bcpovertyreduction.ca, 604-877-4553 or <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/> or Bill Hopwood at Raise the Rates at 604 738-1653, or 778 686-5293 (cell), or bill50@vcn.bc.ca, or see their website at <http://welfare-foodchallenge.org>

BC government releases report on South Okanagan-Similkameen national park process

Long-awaited summary of public consultation process finally released

VANCOUVER -- A report summarizing a public consultation process relating to proposed protected areas, including national park reserve (NPR) status, in the South Okanagan-Similkameen was released May 20 by the British Columbia government. The 81 day process was launched August 13, 2015 and generated 3,460 comments.

"We are really happy the report has finally been released, and we look forward to the BC government sitting down with the federal government and First Nations governments to move this process forward again," said Gwen Barlee, national policy director with the Wilderness Committee. "Establishing a national park reserve is widely supported here and would be excellent news for BC from an environmental and economic perspective."

The report, which did not identify the number of national park supporters or opponents, found themes related to the inadequacy of protection provisions in the region, the importance of connectivity between protected areas and support for a national park reserve. It also highlighted concerns related to hunting access and recreational opportunities.

Although the report appeared to minimize comments which supported a na-

tional park, the appendices showed that the creation of a national park reserve was supported by a large majority of local and provincial groups. There were 27 organizations supporting national park designation versus six groups in opposition.

The South Okanagan-Similkameen ecosystem is one of the most endangered in Canada in terms of rarity, diversity and species richness. Bobolinks, badgers and burrowing owls are just a handful of the species at risk found in the region. Thirty percent of BC's red-listed species, and 46 percent of the province's blue-listed species are found here.

The consultation process hit a few bumps in the road initially when local MLA Linda Larson proposed striking an anonymous handpicked five person panel to review public comments. After a strong public outcry, the secret panel proposal was abandoned.

"At the end of the day the report shows the vast majority of people who participated in the public consultation process support a national park in the South Okanagan-Similkameen. Now we need to respect the public's wishes and get on with implementing it," said Barlee.

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

SeaWorld polishes its marketing message, partnering with Humane Society of the US

By Diane Walsh

Washington DC -- *Lower Island News* has had the pleasure of conducting a one-on-one interview with Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society (HSUS) to find out more about their new partnership with SeaWorld, announced on national television in April, 2016. The announcement came as surprise to many -- albeit an excellent surprise.

The following Q & A examines the promises that have been made by SeaWorld and the role that HSUS will play in the partnership, in Mr. Pacelle's own words.

Lower Island News: Can you describe what was the triggering event or culminating set of discussions which led Sea World to adopt this progressive arrangement?

Wayne Pacelle: Former Congressman John Campbell, who was a leader on animal protection issues during his terms in Washington, is a friend of mine. He suggested I talk with SeaWorld's new CEO Joel Manby and see if we could find common ground. I think Campbell had a sense that as the new person leading SeaWorld, maybe Manby could be the change agent needed there. We decided to pursue discussions with the goal of ending -- decisively -- the possibility of further breeding of orcas; and addressing a series of other critical animal protection issues.

We succeeded in this aim and won an agreement to stop breeding orcas and to phase out the undignified and unnatural theatrical performances with the whales. We also reached terms to have SeaWorld redouble its work in rescue and rehabilitation of marine creatures in distress, to invest in advocacy campaigns against whaling, finning, and sealing, and to revamp its food policies. These were terms that far exceeded the expectations of the activists pressing hardest on the SeaWorld front. In short, nobody had any real plan concerning how to stop breeding of the orcas in San Antonio, Orlando, or in Spain, for example, and nobody was really talking about the major step up in rescue and rehabilitation; campaigning against whaling, sealing, and finning; or changing the company's internal food policies.

LIN: News of the joint letter -- have you had a response from the office of the President?

WP: No, but we know that officials at other levels of government with an interest in the issue were encouraged by the joint appeal and are optimistic about this administration taking some steps to apply additional pressure on Japan. It's no secret that our whale campaigners have been arguing that the United States needs to reclaim its leadership on this issue. The International Whaling Commission will meet later this year and that'll be the real test of the US government's resolve to do more.

LIN: SeaWorld CEO Joel Manby appears to be willing or at the very least open to assisting with the messaging for sea-hunt and shark finning eradication efforts which are often high-profile campaigns [noticeably affiliated with movie stars, e.g.



SeaWorld's Tilikum is the largest orca in captivity, weighing 12,500 pounds.

Pamela Anderson. News reporting has tended to impress on the idea that there has been some kind of shift in thinking and that Manby has nearly become an ally of the animal-rights movement -- Is this overstated or has something major happened?

WP: These commercial killing activities result in the death of millions of marine creatures every year. If SeaWorld can give us a shot in the arm in our efforts to fight these terrible practices, then that's a great development. With more than 20 million visitors, SeaWorld can educate a lot of people about these subjects.

LIN: Was your book manuscript *The Humane Economy* scheduled to be published or did the new arrangement delay or change the timeline in some way?

WP: The discussions with SeaWorld did not delay the publication of *The Humane Economy*, which came out on April 19. The original manuscript was quite critical of SeaWorld, reflecting The HSUS's long record of opposition to keeping orcas in captivity, starting with the hiring of Dr. Naomi Rose in the mid-1990s to lead a campaign against these practices. It did forecast that SeaWorld had to change. When I made the agreement with Joel Manby on the set of animal welfare reforms, I did add a postscript so readers would know that my forecast had come true. There are close to 5000 words in the book on SeaWorld and the shift away from animals in entertainment and spectacle. The humane economy is forming right before our eyes.

LIN: Readers have understood that the California Coastal Commission has been instrumental in placing pressure to end orca breeding in the state of California, with a state bill. What happens now? Does SeaWorld's "promise" just simply extinguish the need to do anything more in California state-wide? Will state-government efforts be channelled to Texas and Florida and elsewhere?

WP: SeaWorld is fortunately looking to drop its lawsuit against the Coastal Commission, and it's supporting a bill in the state legislature to ban orca breeding. I doubt the other states will adopt similar statutes, but the key is that the company has publicly committed to ending breeding of orcas.

LIN: What hold does HSUS have on Sea World other than an honour system?

WP: The agreement received as much attention as any major animal welfare story in many years. SeaWorld has declared its intention to chart a new course and has taken some concrete steps. With each move, SeaWorld tracks more closely toward the values and approaches we support, and it's difficult to imagine a scenario in which the company would backtrack or renege. The public attention and scrutiny is so great, and the will to move forward is also strong on the part of SeaWorld's management.

environment for wild-caught or captive-bred orcas, and were going to support further investigation and research on whether the orcas can be safely and economically moved from their holding facilities to other settings in the future.

LIN: Can you expand on how HSUS will be involved in getting only sustainably-sourced food (e.g. seafood, free-range chicken/eggs) and additionally vegetarian food-choice sources made available on-site at SeaWorld?

WP: There are supply chain specialists both within and outside of The HSUS who work on this kind of thing. We'll make all of our resources available to SeaWorld to move in this direction and have the company be a model one in terms of the food offerings at its parks.

LIN: News of the promise to protect coral reefs and reduce capture and exhibit of exotic and rare fish is engaging as well. How do you see this develop?

WP: Most urgently, it would involve support for a campaign to educate consumers in the United States and abroad about the harmful and inhumane collection and trade of coral reef wildlife (in Hawaii and the Indo-Pacific) for the aquarium trade.

LIN: There is no doubt that these promises are impressive, the concern appears to be when and how, and HS becoming a sort of gatekeeper of other animal-rights groups. Quell the resistance -- sort of idea. Please assure readers this is not the case.

WP: There's nothing that would prevent other groups and parties from reaching out to SeaWorld to discuss issues of concern, or pressing such matters through public campaigns of one kind or another. But we are social reformers at HSUS, and this is what we do. We've negotiated agreements to advance animal welfare in every sector of the economy, and we're going to step up this work in the years ahead.

LIN: The *#Blackfish* film-effect has been remarkable. It's likely to have helped embolden the development on no-further Orca-breeding as well as centre the discussion on the plight of those life-long captive Orcas that SeaWorld maintains can't be released.

WP: *Blackfish* was a breakthrough phenomenon in shifting the landscape around orca captivity, and it's the primary reason we are where we are now. We've encouraged SeaWorld to keep moving on its agenda of engaging the other issues on which we did agree, and to do more to educate the public about those concerns.

LIN: Thank you for sitting down with us, Wayne!

Readers can visit humanesociety.org/news - @HSUSNews and @humanesociety on twitter. They can reach Diane Walsh, MA @dwalshmedia indydianewalsh.com

Murray J. Ellis
Chartered Accountant

Services to Small Businesses
Bookkeepers available

250-385-1011
1325 Tolmie Avenue

Lower Island News writer Diane Walsh has been selected to receive a Certificate of Recognition 2016 from the Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation, for the work she has been doing toward ending genital mutilation (FGM/C) and other injustices against women and girls. Walsh, along with 10 other women, will receive Certificates of Recognition at a ceremony on the National Mall in Washington, DC, Saturday, October 15. Walsh's award reads, "In recognition for advocating and covering FGM/C globally." For more information about Global Women P.E.A.C.E. Foundation, go to <http://www.globalwomanpeacefoundation.org/> -- LIN editor

Working towards a next-generation environmental assessment law for Canada

By Anna Johnston and Monisha Sebastian

Rarely does environmental assessment get to be sexy. While environmental assessment (EA) processes and decisions have been increasingly subject to lawsuits, criticism and protests, the target of dissent is usually either the project (say, Kinder Morgan's controversial proposed oil sands pipeline) or the reviewing body (e.g., the National Energy Board).

But as of November 2015, federal EA processes have gotten their time in the spotlight. Prime Minister Trudeau has mandated no fewer than five cabinet ministers (Environment and Climate Change, Natural Resources, Fisheries, Indigenous and Northern Affairs, and Science) with reviewing federal environmental assessment processes, with the aim of introducing "new, fair processes".

We EA geeks rejoiced, as we appear to have a once-in-decades opportunity to enact a visionary new law governing how we review and make decisions about projects, activities and initiatives that affect us.

The problem

As we have blogged about before, in 2012 the federal government heeded the call from industry to remove environmental protections it believed were impeding business, ramming through hundreds of pages of legal changes through omnibus "budget" bills C-38 and C-45. Unfortunately, Canada's environmental assessment law was a key casualty in this gutting of our federal environmental safety net.

Environmental assessment is meant to allow us to "look before we leap" into activities with potentially significant effects on the environment, communities and the economy. The replacement of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) with the much weaker CEAA 2012 seriously undermined this fundamental goal. The new act eliminated between 4,000 to 6,000 environmental assessment reviews per year, limited the effects that get considered in an assessment, restricted the public's right to participate in EA processes, offloaded the responsibility of EA to provincial governments without clear national guidelines, and set arbitrary timelines for environmental reviews.

These changes to EA processes have eroded public trust and heightened conflict, with EA decisions increasingly subjected to lawsuits and protests.

The take-away from the experience of the last four years is clear: CEAA 2012 is not working.

Turning the corner

To address the root causes of the many problems with federal EA, Canada needs a visionary new EA law. The federal government is expected to announce its formal review process in the coming months and with it, we have a historic opportunity to implement a next-generation environmental assessment regime that could result in processes and

decisions that work not only for communities, but also for the environment.

The good news is that we already have a pretty good idea of what that regime should look like.

On May 1-3, West Coast Environmental Law hosted a Federal Environmental Assessment Reform Summit in Ottawa. Over 30 lawyers, academics and practitioners, representing universities, Indigenous and environmental groups and industry attended the Summit. They gathered to discuss, crystallize their thinking, weigh options and seek to find common ground on solutions to key issues in federal EA. A true brain trust on EA, the collective wisdom of Summit participants stretches back decades and spans interest groups and the country from coast to coast to coast.

Key issues that emerged at the Summit included:

- How to shift from asking how to avoid negative impacts to seeking positive outcomes for affected communities and the environment;
- How to use higher-level assessment at the strategic level to avoid fights at the project level;
- How to actually and meaningfully understand and assess the cumulative impacts of many projects and activities in a region – CEAA 2012 requires an assessment of cumulative effects, but the problems with Treaty 8's hyper-fragmented territory in northeast BC and ongoing federal approvals shows that the current system isn't working;
- How to ensure adequate follow-up after project approvals, enforce approval conditions, monitor for unforeseen impacts and adapt when necessary;
- How to harmonize federal assessments with those of provincial, municipal and Indigenous governments and ensure that this process is built towards the highest standards;
- How to meaningfully engage the public in a two-way dialogue throughout every stage of EA processes so that they truly do "buy-in" to decisions and results;
- How to ensure that all aspects of climate change (both how the project might affect climate change and how climate change might affect the project) are considered, including their upstream and downstream impacts;
- What the institutional architecture of the new EA system will look like, who should be conducting assessments and who should be making final decisions, and how to ensure this isn't a solely political process but that decisions are made based on science and evidence; and
- How to uphold the federal government's obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (including the requirement to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous groups before making decisions that could affect their rights and title) and engage in a nation-to-nation dialogue with Indigenous governments.

These are some difficult questions. But while the problems may seem daunting, we can move forward. We have examples of good sustainability assessments in Canada, including in the Lower Churchill and Voisey Bay assessments and the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry.

Many of the above questions were answered during the EA Reform Summit, and the outcomes will be made public and used to inform the review. You can learn more at envirolawsmatter.ca

Anna Johnston is a staff counsel and Monisha Sebastian is a summer law student at West Coast Environmental Law. West Coast Environmental Law opened its doors in 1974, and for over 40 years has been actively promoting progressive environmental law reform in BC and across Canada, helping establish and shape many significant environmental legislative initiatives.

How do you feel about the ferry service?
Building a sustainable economy?

And seriously bringing in democratic reform?

These are the kinds of issues MLA Gary Holman works tirelessly for, representing us at home and in the Legislature, and he needs our input.

Join us for this important political and social gathering.

Our traditional
LAMB BARBECUE
is back, with vegetarian option.

Join us on Saturday, July 16th,
from 3:00 with the BBQ at 5:00

at the Farmer's Institute
at 351 Rainbow Road, Salt Spring Island

(We also recommend that you attend the
Farmer's Market in Ganges earlier that day)

For Information about tickets, program, travel, etc. contact either
Irene at 250-537-5347 or Claudia at 250-653-4100.

Victoria-Beacon Hill
New Democrats

Stay in Touch!

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

Saanich North and the Islands
New Democrats

Stay in touch with your Executive!

Email your president Allan Collier at silcol@telus.net

Cowichan Valley
New Democrats

Watch for us at the
Cobble Hill Fair August 27 and
Cowichan Exposition September 9-11

Taking the Names Down from the Hill -- Poetry by Philip Kevin Paul

What is Saanich to me now?
Merely the sheer promise
of Matthew before his death,

merely my father's suffering fight
against *his own* death,

merely the painful pierce of doubt
through to my mother
before her death,

and forever the wisdom
we need and will continue to need

rotting out in hollows
in Uncle Gabriel's bones,
under pounds of earth.

It pleases me to be angry,
to be angry and to speak and to write it.

I'm glad, finally,
to have shrunk down Saanich
—what I imagined to be Saanich—
and put it away.

What I imagined was my only home

lost forever under tons of concrete
and vulgar electric houses humming
the sickness into us.

What I imagined to be the only rightness
worth striving for or dying for and making

their deaths right.

Sorrow was pathetic and laden
with a silence so vast that
the drummer could not wake us.

The people went into the hills.

They went there together as one body
knowing who they were
to bring the names home.

Where are the ancestors
we keep calling ourselves?

And while the roadways were being
imposed,
the crowns were cast aside and tangled
and will never be brought home
and never properly given.

However, sorrow has had its time.

The mourning must break

at last. I will tell you
what they really left us.

They left us
magic in everything,

the *beautiful way*
in everything. But what
we truly own has never left us:

magic in word,
magic in thought,

magic in song,
magic in touch,

and yes, magic in the breath
that joins them.

I went to the hills alone

with what I'd shrunk Saanich to

in a few measly pores of the lifeline
of the palm of my hand.

From there,
where it was unceremoniously cradled,

I blew it out over the cobwebbed under-
brush
four paces off the footpath
and felt that my work was done
without even singing a song.

On the way back down I stopped

and touched the road but twenty paces
from someone's house,
someone I've never even met
and breathed out *Saanich*,
this is Saanich.

I began to dance. I danced at least as
foolishly as a Scotsman
gone Indian, naked in the woods!
(Or an Irishman for that matter.)

I named and renamed everything

that I spied with my little eye:
Saanich. And my dance?

When I figured I had it down,
that I had it just right, I knew
it was time, as it is for us all.

So by the gift of this
old unapologetic magic
I called it the Dance of Forever,

our newest tradition.

Philip Kevin Paul received a degree in writing and English from Camosun College and the University of Victoria. "Though I have a somewhat limited vocabulary in my own language, I grew up hearing my language [SENC'OTEN], especially when referring to the ideas that do not translate into English . . . many of my poems could be considered

translations; I am trying to express the feeling of a tradition that has always contained me." from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (third edition, edited by Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2005.)

Rising hydro bills pushing mills to burn fossil fuel

By Ben Parfitt

Premier Christy Clark's vow to push work at the \$9-billion Site C dam "past the point of no return" may be music to the ears of some construction contractors, but not to all pulp and paper firms.

In a great irony, as the costs soar into the billions to build infrastructure to supply "clean" electricity to natural gas companies and a hoped-for liquefied natural gas industry, the province and BC Hydro are imposing costs that are pushing existing industries to boost their reliance on fossil fuels. One pulp mill near Quesnel is a case in point. To defray rapidly rising hydro costs, the company plans to spend millions of dollars to produce its own power using natural gas.

Well before logging contractors began levelling old-growth forest beside the Peace River last summer in preparation for building Site C, four pulp company executives warned Victoria that mounting hydro costs threatened the economic viability of their operations. The companies operate mills that grind wood into pulp mechanically, a very energy-intensive form of pulping compared to mills that rely more on chemi-

cals to do the job.

"We estimate that the six mechanical pulp mills purchased eight percent of the electricity sold domestically by BC Hydro last year," the presidents and CEOs of Canfor, West Fraser, Catalyst Paper and Paper Excellence told Finance Minister Mike de Jong in June 2014.

Two months earlier, hydro rates jumped nine percent across the board. The increases marked the first of five annual rate hikes that would see hydro bills climb 28 percent. The news sent shock waves through the mechanical pulp industry, where some mills consume up to 70,000 households-worth of electricity per year.

Adding further to industry woes, de Jong was told, the reintroduced provincial sales tax of the year before effectively pushed the industry's hydro bills up another seven percent, because under the previous harmonized sales tax, taxes paid on electricity were largely refundable.

Because of these hikes, Energy Minister Bill Bennett and BC Hydro unveiled a \$100-million fund that let qualifying mechanical pulp companies underwrite the costs of new energy conservation projects.

"Here's the kicker," Bennett said after

making the announcement. "By incentivizing this conservation by these big [power] users, BC Hydro is going to avoid spending \$265 million to acquire new sources of power generation."

But the companies, including Quesnel River Pulp owner West Fraser, said the \$100-million fund wasn't enough. They have continued to lobby for PST exemption.

In the meantime, a presentation by West Fraser executives at a public meeting in Quesnel in early January underscored what Quesnel River Pulp is up against.

By 2018, QRP's hydro payments will be 80 percent higher than they were 10 years earlier, meaning the company will pay \$16 million more per year than it did in 2008.

To address the problem, the company is considering a \$25-million investment in needed energy-conservation measures, of which \$15 million may be subsidized under the fund announced by Bennett.

QRP has also applied under a call for power from BC Hydro to install a \$25-million gas-fired turbine to produce power at the mill. The investment would allow QRP to lower its hydro bills by about 15 percent.

QRP originally wanted to install two tur-

bines, but Hydro's call effectively capped the gas-fired power it would take to one turbine's worth.

Why the cap? BC Hydro doesn't need the power. In fact, its own projections show it has excess power through 2028. Only with the increasingly unlikely arrival of an LNG industry in BC is there any possible need for a whole bunch more power. Hence the premier's new-found interest in sending Site C power to Alberta.

In the meantime, the race continues to advance construction at Site C. With major power users severely challenged to pay today's hydro bills, it's anybody's guess how much worse things will be if the most expensive megaproject in BC history is completed and the costs are recouped through even higher Hydro bills.

Despite repeated calls to subject the megaproject to independent review by the BC Utilities Commission, the provincial government refuses to do so. Much as it champions impounding a wall of water behind a giant dam, our government also appears content to let the contradictions pile up at Site C.

Ben Parfitt is a resource policy analyst with the CCPA-

Increasing private surgeries won't solve BC's waitlist problems: study

VANCOUVER -- A new study lays out detailed recommendations for tackling the province's growing surgical wait times -- now among the longest in Canada -- and warns against plans to increase contracting-out to private clinics.

The study, released April 26 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, assesses the provincial government's recent policy paper, *Future Directions for Surgical Services in British Columbia*. Lead author Andrew Longhurst says that while the paper includes some positive recommendations for improving surgical care within the public system, it also proposes major steps towards health care privatization.

"What's most troubling," says Longhurst, "is the recommendation to contract out in-patient surgeries to private clinics." Currently, private clinics can only perform day surgeries. The government's policy paper recommends increasing the allowable stay in private clinics to three days, which would enable the majority of all surgeries to be contracted out.

"The international evidence shows that

increased private delivery of health care is more expensive and less safe, and will destabilize the public health care system," says Longhurst.

"There are some very fixable problems in the public health care system that are contributing to longer waits," Longhurst says. "Almost 20 percent of operating rooms in BC aren't used to full capacity. We don't have adequate home and community care for seniors, so they end up in hospital, which contributes to bed shortages and longer waits for surgery. We have pilot projects that reduce wait times but they aren't being scaled up province-wide."

One of these pilots is the Richmond Hip and Knee Reconstruction Project, which reduced wait times from 20 months to five months by increasing operating room efficiency. That project has been terminated. Longhurst also points to international examples like Scotland's overhaul of surgical services that led to a three-month maximum wait time for 90 percent of all trauma and orthopedic surgeries.

He cautions that such improvements to

Trudeau must fix Site C Dam fiasco

VANCOUVER - The Wilderness Committee is demanding that Prime Minister Trudeau refuse to sign off on any new federal permits required for Site C construction after a damning report by leading Canadian scientists.

"We are calling on the Prime Minister to stop the dam. In the wake of 250 scientists issuing a scathing statement of concern,

public health care would be undermined by a major shift to private delivery. "The Minister of Health needs to state clearly whether or not the government will proceed with plans to allow three-day stays," says Longhurst. "This will open the door to a US-style private hospital sector and drastically change our health care system. British Columbians have a right to know if this is on the table."

Reducing Surgical Wait Times in BC: The Case for Public Innovation and Provincial Leadership is co-authored by Andrew Longhurst, Marcy Cohen and Dr Margaret McGregor and is available at www.policyalternatives.ca/rethink-surgical-waits

it's important that Trudeau considers the jarring financial, human rights and environmental impacts detailed in the report," said Joe Foy, National Campaign Director at the Wilderness Committee.

The scientists and researchers also sent a letter to the Prime Minister calling into question the original process used for approving the dam project.

"The federal government's position is that projects like the Site C Dam that were approved by the previous Conservative government will not be re-visited," said Foy. "This is an outrageous position and a slap in the face to those who have been demanding justice. BC taxpayers are being fleeced and First Nations and farmers lands are being flooded for this dam project -- the government must do the right thing."

The scientists found that the environmental assessment for the Site C Dam project did not consider whether or not the dam would constitute an infringement of First Nation rights.

The scientists say that it's not too late to stop the dam project, even though clearing of old-growth forest has already begun.

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 bbcf@bbcf.ca.

ESQUIMALT-SAANICH-SOOKE NDP will-

hold its 2016 Annual General Meeting on Saturday, June 25, at St. Peter and St. Paul Church parish hall, 1379 Equimalt Road (turn right from Admirals Road). Registration 1:30 pm, meeting 2-4 pm. Besides the election of the 2016-2017 executive, the meeting will include motions to amend the constitution and bylaws. If you have questions or need more information, email esquimaltsaanichsookendp@gmail.com.

BARBECUE! BARBECUE! BARBECUE! Join us at the Annual Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke Supporter Appreciation Barbecue, on Saturday, July 23, 2-5 pm, at 3837 Duke

Road, Metchosin. Admission by donation (suggested donation \$20) Questions/information: esquimaltsaanichsookendp@gmail.com.

HOTDOGS, HAMBURGERS AND HORGAN, a community event hosted by Juan de Fuca New Democrats, will be held on Sunday, August 14, from noon-2:30 pm, at Sooke Flats Campground. Fun for the whole family includes a great BBQ, games for the kids, and a dessert auction. For further information, contact president Sharon Wilkinson by email at sawilkinson@shaw.ca or by phone at 250-478-5907.

Kinder Morgan approval is meaningless with BC opposed

VANCOUVER -- Wilderness Committee is outraged but not surprised the National Energy Board (NEB) approved the Kinder Morgan pipeline May 19 despite overwhelming opposition in British Columbia.

"I shouldn't be surprised, but this is an outrageous decision. The NEB has ignored and wasted the time of countless communities, First Nations and individuals who have stood up to oppose this irresponsible pipeline proposal," said Peter McCartney, Climate Campaigner with the Wilderness Committee. "Kinder Morgan's project has no social licence and this pipeline will not be built."

Widespread criticism of flaws in the NEB process meant the decision was a foregone conclusion.

"Nobody had much hope the NEB would act in the public interest and reject this project," said McCartney. "Now the ball is in Trudeau's court to do the right thing -- protect our coast and our climate."

The NEB's review of the pipeline proposal faced widespread criticism. During the hearings, they were denounced for ignoring the project's opponents. Climate concerns were not part of the review despite the pipeline enabling growth of the tar sands. A key study from the US National

Academy of Sciences highly critical about the response to a diluted bitumen spill was dismissed because of procedural technicalities. No cross-examination of Kinder Morgan was allowed.

Worst of all, thousands of British Columbians were shut out of the process because they were not deemed "directly affected".

"Nobody had much hope the NEB would act in the public interest and reject this project," said McCartney. "Now the ball is in Trudeau's court to do the right thing -- protect our coast and our climate."

On May 17, the federal government announced its additional consultation process, a panel that will travel the pipeline and tanker route to gauge local opposition to the project. On that day, the Wilderness Committee launched an [interactive map](#) with testimonies from communities and First Nations who raised their concerns at the NEB hearings in January.

"British Columbians have made it crystal clear this pipeline is not welcome in our communities," said McCartney. "No new process is going to change that."

For more information, readers can contact: Peter McCartney, Climate Campaigner, Wilderness Committee, by phone at 778-239-1935, or by email at peter@wildernesscommittee.org.

Horgan says broken Kinder Morgan pipeline approval process not good enough for people of BC

VICTORIA -- The rubber-stamp approval by the federal National Energy Board fails to meet the concerns of British Columbians about the proposed Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline project, New Democrat leader [John Horgan](#) said May 19.

Horgan said the NEB report does not address the four key concerns he set out in opposing the proposed pipeline expansion project.

"Nothing in this flawed process and proposal will lead us to change our opposition. This was Stephen Harper's broken and unfair approval process, and Christy Clark hid behind it. British Columbians can't help seeing this as a rubber-stamp approval that fails to meet the concerns we all have with this proposal," Horgan said.

"We'll be reviewing the NEB recommendations, and we'll be watching closely as the new federal panel and the court-ordered provincial panel complete the First Nations and community consultations neglected by the Harper process.

"For BC New Democrats, there are four

big concerns with this pipeline proposal that remain unanswered. This a process that ignored climate change. This is a pipeline company that has refused to answer key questions from municipalities, from provincial governments and other concerned Canadians.

"We've got zero clarity and comfort around Kinder Morgan's oil-spill response plans, and we've got a failure to ensure that First Nations directly affected by this project have been consulted and heard," Horgan said.

"Our concerns about the silence of this process on climate change was echoed this week by Christy Clark's own climate change leadership team, when members of that group warned the people of BC about the lack of action taken by the BC Liberal government to limit emissions.

"We know that inaction by Christy Clark's government means BC will miss its 2020 climate change targets. As leader of the BC New Democrats, I'm committed to getting BC back on track to meet our climate change targets," Horgan said.

Preparations for oil tanker referendum continue

Ottawa appoints new pipeline panel; citizens ready initiative drive

BURNABY -- Organizers with BC citizen group Dogwood Initiative are continuing with preparations for an eventual referendum on oil tankers despite the May 17 appointment of a new advisory panel to study Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion proposal.

Federal Minister of Natural Resources, Jim Carr, released the names of the three panellists responsible for undertaking the public consultation on the Kinder Morgan pipeline. Members include former Tsawwassen First Nation Chief, Kim Baird; University of Winnipeg president and former senior Alberta government official, Annette Trimbee; and First Nations treaty negotiator, Tony Penikett

"We welcome the government's decision to hear from residents along the pipeline and oil tanker route, and we encourage our supporters to participate in good faith," said Kai Nagata, communications director for Dogwood. "However, we still need a democratic insurance policy in case Ottawa tries to move ahead without consent."

The appointment of the three-member advisory panel, which has no legal authority, came days ahead of the anticipated approval of Kinder Morgan's proposal by the National Energy Board. "We're all expecting a 'yes' from the NEB, and clearly this announcement is meant to soften the blow," said Nagata.

Justin Trudeau told Nagata during the federal election that the NEB would not approve Kinder Morgan. "Because we're going to change the government," said the

Liberal leader in August 2015, "and that process needs to be redone." Since then the NEB has continued its assessment unchanged.

Notably, the NEB refused to consider a report from the National Academy of Sciences that found diluted bitumen sinks in water. The federal process has also failed to consider the effects of burning the heavy crude blend which would account for 90 percent of the project's global climate impact.

"Ultimately, this is not a scientific decision. It's a political decision," said Nagata. "If politicians decide to throw BC under the bus, we'll be ready to put this to a democratic vote."

Two in three British Columbians continue to oppose the expansion of oil tanker traffic on the coast. If the project gets the go-ahead from federal and provincial decision makers, voters have the option of launching a citizens' initiative under British Columbia's *Recall and Initiative Act*.

Like the HST referendum in 2011, a successful petition drive could trigger a province-wide vote, allowing British Columbians a democratic say over oil tanker projects on the coast.

Dogwood Initiative is BC's largest citizen group, with more than 246,000 contactable supporters in the province. Dogwood first announced the "[Let B.C. Vote](#)" campaign in response to the federal government's approval of the Enbridge Northern Gateway oil tanker project in 2014.

New Democrat bill would help protect animals in distress

VICTORIA — New Democrat MLA for Coquitlam-Maillardville, Selina Robinson, introduced a bill that would help prevent animals from suffering or dying in vehicles during the heat of summer.

"We cannot have another summer with animals dying while left alone in hot vehicles, it is time to act," said Robinson. "The Christy Clark government said that they would possibly make changes this spring, but that has not happened, and that's why I'm bringing forth this legislation myself. I sincerely hope the Christy Clark government will support this bill."

Robinson introduced the *Distressed Animals Act* in the legislature on May 3 and was joined by advocates from the BC SPCA in support of the proposed changes.

"In 2013, the BC SPCA received 850 calls regarding animals left in hot cars, and in 2014, they received well over 1,000 calls," said Robinson. "The BC SPCA only has 26 special provincial constables working across BC and must liaise with the RCMP and municipal bylaw enforcement to respond to these urgent calls."

In response to the National Energy Board's approval of the Kinder Morgan, expansion project, Christianne Wilhelmsen, executive director of Georgia Strait Alliance — an intervener in the NEB hearings — made the following statement:

"No one is surprised by this outcome. The NEB review was broken from the start, and virtually guaranteed to rubber stamp the project. It failed to properly consult First Nations or the concerned public, it didn't consider climate impacts, and it excluded key evidence on how bitumen behaves when spilled. The review process and the

The bill would amend the Community Charter and the Vancouver Charter permitting bylaw enforcement to seize animals in distress where there is inadequate ventilation in a vehicle and it amends the *Motor Vehicle Act* noting that a person commits an offence if they are transporting an animal without providing for adequate ventilation.

Robinson noted that the act has wide support at the municipal level and called on the Christy Clark government to move forward with it.

"These necessary changes would permit first responders to take immediate action and ensure more awareness and compliance so that our pets in British Columbia can be protected from the horrible death that can result from being left in a hot, unventilated vehicle," said Robinson.

To view the Distressed Animals Act - 2016, go to

<http://bcndpcaucus.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/05/Distressed-Animal-Act-2016.pdf>

NEB itself has lost all public trust and the federal government knows it, so today's recommendation carries no credibility.

"Four months of additional consultation is not enough to fix the flaws in the former process, and won't change one fundamental fact: Kinder Morgan does not have social license in BC. First Nations, municipalities, the Province and the public have said "No". A raft of court cases is already underway, and citizens have already been arrested in protest at the project. Communities clearly do not grant permission to Kinder Morgan, so permits cannot be granted by the government."

Directory of locations, organizations, publications of interest

MLA COMMUNITY OFFICES

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

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

Juan de Fuca Community Office, John Horgan, MLA, 122-2806 Jacklin Road, Victoria, BC V9B 5A4, phone 250-391-2801, fax 250-391-2804, email john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca.

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

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

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

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

MPs and COMMUNITY OFFICES

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

Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke Community Office, Randall Garrison, MP, 2904 Tillicum Road (the corner of Gorge and Tillicum, Victoria, BC, V9A 4A5, open 10 am-4 pm, Monday-Thursday or by appointment. Phone 250-405-4550; fax 250-405-4568.

Alistair MacGregor, MP, House of Commons, Confederation Building, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6., email alistair.macgregor@parl.gc.ca, or visit his website at www.alistairmacgregor.ca.

Cowichan-Malahat-Langford Community Offices, Alistair MacGregor, MP, Duncan Office, 101-128 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC, V9L 1P1, Langford Office: 3202B Happy Valley Road, phone 1-866-609-9998, or email at alistair.macgregor@parl.gc.ca.

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

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

PROVINCIAL NDP CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONS

Cowichan Valley New Democrats: Write PO Box 102, Duncan, BC, V9L 1P0, or contact president Deb Foster, at 250-510-0544 or by email at deb.foster21@gmail.com, or email cowichanvalley.NDP@shaw.ca.

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

Juan de Fuca New Democrats: Phone president Sharon Wilkins at 250-478-5907 or email her at sawilkinson@shaw.ca.

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

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

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

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

Victoria-Swan Lake New Democrats: Contact President Trish Richards at victoriaswanlakendp@gmail.com or write PO Box 282, 1681 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC, V8T 2C1.

FEDERAL NDP RIDING ASSOCIATIONS

Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke New Democrats: Contact President Grant McLachlan at 778-676-4033; email him at esquimaltsaanichsookendp@gmail.com, or write to PO Box 622, 105-1497 Admirals Road, Victoria, BC, V9A 2P8.

Cowichan -Malahat-Langford New Democrats (formerly Nanaimo-Cowichan): Contact president Anne Balding at 250-710-0351 or email her at a.balding@hotmail.com.

Saanich-Gulf Islands New Democrats: Contact co-president Bill Graham by email to ndpsaanichgulflslands@gmail.com or Irene Wright (Gulf Islands) by phone/fax at 250-537-5347, or email to aiwright@telus.net.. See also Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/SaanichGulflslands or website: http://alturl.com/ofy8.

Victoria New Democrats: Contact president James Coccola, by phone at 250-514-5518, or by email to president@victoriandp.ca, or visit their website at www.victoriandp.ca.

PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL NDP OFFICES

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

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

OTHER GROUPS YOU MAY WANT TO REACH

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

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

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

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

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

Canadian Health Coalition: phone 613-233-1018.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Human Rights Internet: www.hri.ca.

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

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

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

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

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

Seniors Entitlement Service, assisting seniors 55+ in Greater Victoria with pensions, healthcare and other issues at QuadraVillage Community Centre, 901 Kings Rd. Trained advocates on duty Monday and Thursdays, 9am-3pm. Tel.250-388-7696, ext 223.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

ALTERNATIVE WEBSITES

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

www.avaaz.org/en/global--By confronting such threats as global warming together, Avaaz hopes to build a more just, tolerant and vibrant world.

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

http://dominionpaper.ca--A Canadian ezine covering national and international stories that mainstream sources may not cover.

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

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

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

www.ndpsocialists.ca/Issues.html

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

http://pacificfreepress.com

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

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

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

http://socialcoast.org

http://socialenvironmentalliance.wordpress.com

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

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

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

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

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

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