

Lower Island NEWS

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Victoria, BC

The Women's Boat to Gaza

A report by Eva Manly

The Women's Boat to Gaza had three objectives:

1. To bring HOPE to the people of Gaza, to let them know that there are people in the world who care, that they are not forgotten and to support their incredible spirit of resilience.

2. To break Israel's Illegal Blockade of Gaza.

3. To focus the eyes of the world on the desperate situation of the people of Gaza.

According to a UN study, Gaza will be uninhabitable by 2020. For many it is already uninhabitable. Large numbers of people are dependent on humanitarian aid for survival and many children suffer from malnutrition

Why is this?

During the strangling 10-year blockade, Israel has waged three long bombing wars on Gaza with thousands dead:

- Targeting infrastructure; water treatment, sewage treatment and electrical generation.

- Targeting homes, schools, hospitals, and places of worship.

- There is a limited supply of medicines and little or no access to specialized medical care.

- 80,000 people are still homeless as a result of the bombing in 2014.

- Fishers are regularly attacked by the Israeli military.

- Crops are destroyed at the time of harvest.

- More and more farmland is taken for the Israeli determined "buffer zone".

- Water is not fit for human consumption.

- Only 5% of water is safe to drink; children are getting kidney disease and colon cancer.

- Raw sewage flows into the sea and, during winter storms, it flows in some streets. The water table is being contaminated with raw sewage.

- Electricity is available only sporadically.

- 40% of the people are unemployed including 70% of youth.

- Gaza is essentially a large open air prison where people are trapped, with no escape and no place to hide.

None of the above are natural developments; Gaza is deliberately being "de-developed" and destroyed in the false name of "security".

Why should we care? Why, in a world with so many human rights issues, do we focus on Palestinians in Gaza? We might be better to ask, "Why do our government and our tax dollars support this inhumane situation?"

According to Jeff Halper, founder of the: Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), the Palestinians of Gaza, and of the Occupied/Colonized Territories, are used as human test subjects (guinea pigs) for the latest in military technology, equipment and techniques of subjugation and control. This important information is detailed in Jeff Halper's book *War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification*

Was the Women's Boat to Gaza a success? YES; the idea of women's boats challenging the Israeli blockade had great popular appeal.

Although the AMAL 11 was unable to sail due to technical difficulties (much to our disappointment!) and the ZATOUNA, with 13 women from 13 countries, was hijacked by the Israeli Navy in International waters before reaching the shores of Gaza, the campaign had amazing media coverage which helped break the media silence surrounding the Israeli blockade.

In fact, the Women's Boat to Gaza received international media attention – except in the US and Canada. Newfoundland was the exception with good CBC and newspaper coverage. Perhaps they were able to identify with the people of Gaza. . Our work will continue until the block-



Taking a practice sail before they set out for Gaza, the crew takes turns steering and working with the sails of the sailing boat AMAL Hope

Jaldia Abubakra (from Gaza but living in Spain for 30 years) and Maite Momo, seasoned Rainbow Warrior sailor and writer



ade is broken; soon we will be planning the next campaign and we will be in touch when plans begin to take shape.

Details of the sailing and more media articles can be seen here: <http://canadaboatgaza.org/2016.10/19/international-media-coverage/>

So what more can we do?

We can join others from around the world to work for justice using Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions/BDS to put economic pressure on Israel to end the Occupation which is a Colonial Settler project.

Israeli's like Yonatan Shapira, and journalist Yudit Ilany with Israel Social TV say that international pressure is essential for bringing an end to the Occupation. Israelis who support justice cannot achieve this alone, they need our support to break the illegal blockade of Gaza and to bring an end to the Occupation and the Colonial Settler project.

The following words spoken by Chris

Hedges in a Rally in New York in August 2014 speak for me and many others:

"Peace in the Promised Land will come when we force, through boycotts, divestments and sanctions, the powerful to end the blockade of Gaza and to deny the instruments of death to Israel. But it is up to us.

"We are all that stands between the Palestinians and obliteration...."

"The road to justice will be long and hard. But there is no turning back, for we are no longer driven by a vision of suffering but possessed by it. We hear the cries from Gaza. We carry these cries within us...."

"We will not rest until there is comfort and justice for the oppressed. We will not rest until the children of Gaza have their childhood returned to them. We will not rest until the people of Gaza, no longer imprisoned, live in a free and independent Palestine."

Seasons' Greetings and Happy New Year!

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The BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) campaign

A report from Theresa Wolfwood

Travelling through Palestine I have met with activists, students, farmers, teachers and friends; I had a lengthy discussion with Jamal Juma, founder of Stop the Wall movement and a coordinator of the BDS campaign.

One hundred seventy organizations in Palestine, from former groups to student and women's organizations to trade unions came together in 2005 to call for a global boycott and divestment of Israeli products and industries. It is part of the movement to end the occupation and dismantle the wall that Israel has built around and inside Palestine. In this context BDS is a human rights issue.

Within Palestine, school children are told of alternatives to Israeli food products and encouraged to buy Palestinian dairy and fruit products. Children and women are considered key to the success of BDS within Palestine.

Globally the BDS campaign is succeeding on many levels. Juma said that in Europe the sale of fresh products has dropped drastically and some Israeli companies have folded. Companies and people with conscience are boycotting/divesting from Israel and companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The United Methodist Church (US) has divested its holding connected to Israel, The Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the US United Electrical Workers Union have joined the campaign. In Spain, 26 local and regional governments – including Sevilla, Gran Canaria, Badalona and Terrassa -- have passed resolutions in support of BDS initiatives and Apartheid Free Zones initiatives.

The French corporation Veolia pulled out of the Jerusalem Light Rail, an illegal rail system built to facilitate the growth and expansion of Israeli colonial settlements on occupied Palestine.

Here in Canada, Confédération des syndicats nationaux, the Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, Quebec, Canada resolved to join the BDS movement and support the call to impose a military embargo on Israel. The CSN represents 325,000 workers in all



The writer took this photo of a boycott mural which is on the side of a barber shop near the University of Bethlehem.

sectors of activity in nearly 2,000 unions across Quebec. The United Church of Canada (UCC) adopted a resolution to boycott products originating from illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank

Norway has led the way in pension fund divestment from companies that profit from the occupation – unfortunately the Canada Pension Fund still has investments that support the Israeli military.

The list goes on internationally while the cultural boycott is embarrassing Israel; many performers and intellectuals refuse to go to Israel. The American Anthropological Association has passed BDS resolutions to support the academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions. Many US universities are divesting from US companies that profit from the occupation. The Teachers Union of Ireland has an academic boycott of Israel. From New Zealand to Europe, Japan to South Africa and the USA, the BDS

campaign grows daily – as Palestinians civilians die in random shootings by Israeli military – 200 in the last year.

Juma thanks Canadians who support the rights of Palestinians by promoting the BDS campaign.

Here in Victoria we can participate in many ways. Workers and church members can check their pension funds and investments. We can call on BC Liquor Board to stop selling Israeli wine. We never need to buy Israeli produce – there are always alternatives. No one needs SodaStream bubbles. And now there is a global boycott, we can join against HP computer products. This company provides equipment to the Israeli military for use in Palestine.

Daily, Palestinians are injured, detained, tortured – as Juma has been several times – for their non-violent resistance to occupation and the defence of their human rights. The Canada BDS Coalition is connecting grassroots resistance in Canada and the world.

Canada was a major signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. Canadian politicians continue to support Israel while seven million Palestinians are denied the rights of Article 13 of the Declaration, the right of return for exiles.

It is time our politicians changed from hypocrisy to humanity and supported the human rights of Palestinians.

Theresa Wolfwood is a Victoria activist who will be speaking about her experiences in Palestine at events in early 2017.



Wolfwood suggests readers tell the BC Liquor Board not to sell Israeli wine, seen here in a photo taken in a BCLB store.

The Women's Boat to Gaza, from page 1



Author Eva Manly practices steering under the guidance of the Captain Maja Ramm who could not sail because of the delays. Ramm is an engineering student and had to go back to university in Norway for exams.

Esquimalt-Metchosin New Democrats!

Note our new address:

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A year-end donation gives you a tax receipt and helps us
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Season's Greetings to All

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Season's Greetings to all!

Please support your local food bank.

“This doesn’t bode well for the success of our society”

Councillors call on provincial government for a poverty reduction plan for BC

British Columbia is now the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction strategy despite having one of the highest poverty rates in Canada.

On September 27, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition hosted a press conference in Victoria to highlight the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) motion to support the creation and implementation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy for the Province of British Columbia. The resolution was voted on the evening of September 27..

Twenty-four municipalities have passed resolutions in support of a poverty reduction plan for BC with legislated targets and timelines, expressing a strong collective call from local governments for provincial responsibility and action to address the root causes of poverty in BC.

The UBCM has unanimously passed resolutions in support of this call since 2009; and the BC Select Standing Committee on Government and Finance Services has recommended a provincial poverty reduction plan for the last three years.

When will the government start listening to British Columbians?

Hosted by Jeremy Loveday, Victoria city councillor, the crowd at the event had the opportunity to hear the concerns and hopes of local councillors from different regions throughout BC as they urged the provincial government to listen and take action on poverty, homelessness and inequality.

Councillor Rob Southcott never thought he would see homelessness in Powell River but it is now on the rise in his community. “With a below 1 percent vacancy rate, the intense competition for housing translates into people with means getting housing while people without means don’t and end up sleeping rough. Housing is a crisis even in our small communities in BC.”

Michael Prevost, councillor from Terrace, has seen rents increase from \$500 to \$1500 and says, “We are not prepared for the social challenges of a resource boom. We are failing our citizens. A poverty reduction plan for BC would allow businesses and community members to address basic needs around housing, health, employment and food security.”

“It’s affecting our local economies,” highlighted Andrea Reimer, councillor from Vancouver. “Businesses can’t find workers because workers can’t find housing.”

“We don’t need shelters,” says Hilary Marks, a local homeless shelter worker. “We don’t need food banks. We need a poverty reduction plan for BC. Please help!”

Trish Garner with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition stressed that “Poverty is bad for all of us. Homeless people die half a lifetime younger. Children in poverty are not growing up happy and healthy. The health of all of us suffers from living in an unequal society; and our province is down 8 to 9 billion dollars each year paying for the costs of poverty.”

Many city councils are doing what they can at the local level in the absence of strong provincial investment, according to Vera LeFranc, Surrey city councillor, who advocates for “good access to childcare, affordable housing, transportation and raising incomes. Moving the dial on any of these things makes a huge difference.”

“The problem is moving into the middle class,” says Valerie Warmington, councillor from Nelson and coordinator of Nelson At Its Best, their local poverty reduction strategy. “Full time, working people are not able to make ends meet. So many issues facing our communities are provincial responsibilities.”

A provincial poverty reduction plan needs to raise incomes -- welfare has been frozen for almost a decade now and the minimum wage is below the poverty line -- and address the affordability crunch that most of us are feeling these days through investment in social housing, childcare, health and education. There also need to be targeted commitments to the most marginalized communities.

In closing, Garner said, “While our communities are different, it is striking how similar the challenges are. The housing crisis is a central theme throughout BC.”

“It’s clear that we care about our communities and this collective call is an expression of that.”

The question is, does the provincial government care?

In Memoriam Fidel Castro



August 13, 1926–November 25, 2016

On January 1st, 1959, a 32-year-old revolutionary, sporting a rather thin, scruffy beard, became the leader of a small island nation.

An observer at the time might be forgiven for failing to appreciate the world-historical significance of this event. Latin American revolutionaries, after all, were nothing new, nor was it unusual for them to invoke the principles of socialism and national sovereignty. Yet none had as yet succeeded in liberating his nation from the clutches of capitalism or of US imperialism: in the end, each had either abandoned his principles or else been defeated.

It is a testimony to Fidel Castro’s extraordinary strength of character, and to his equally remarkable political and military capabilities, that he succumbed to neither of these fates.

The domestic achievements of Castro’s revolution, won in the face of unwavering US hostility, obstruction, and sabotage, are well known: from dismal prerevolutionary levels, quality-of-life indicators in such areas as health and education were rapidly brought up to First World standards, while population rose from about six million in 1959 to eleven million today.

Equally impressive, however, are Cas-

tro’s international achievements, for under his leadership Cuba played an outsized role on the world stage. In particular, Cuba’s vital support for African liberation movements in their struggle against colonialism and white-settler rule arguably changed the course of history in several countries.

To cite only one example, Cuba helped Angola’s revolutionary government defend itself against a rebel army supported militarily by the US and South Africa. In the long, hard-fought Battle of Cuito Cuanavale (August 1987–March 1988), Cuban troops were instrumental in defeating the South African Defence Forces, an accomplishment widely credited with turning the tide against the Apartheid regime.

Small wonder that one of Nelson Mandela’s first acts on being released from prison just two years later was to pay a visit to Castro, in the course of which he hailed the Cuban Revolution as “a source of inspiration to all freedom-loving people”.

On a global scale, leftists have precious few victories to celebrate, and more than one of them we owe to the political courage, moral integrity, and military genius of Fidel Castro.

—Peter Brunette



The annual 7 day Welfare Food Challenge is organized by Raise the Rates.



The challenge asks participants to live on the amount of food \$18 will buy for a week. Raise the Rates has calculated that \$18 is the amount a welfare recipient will have available after he or she has paid their rent and other expenses.

Season’s Greetings & Happy New Year

Saanich North & the Islands NDP

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It's our opinion

This holiday season, are you giving change?

We are very generous during the holiday season. We give to food banks, we donate to charities, we volunteer at soup kitchens, we collect clothing for families in need; in short, we give our time and money because we care about those less fortunate than ourselves. In fact, BC is one of the most generous provinces in Canada if we look at the average percentage of income we donate to charity in comparison to the rest of the country.

And yet, BC has had one of the highest poverty rates in Canada for the last 15 years, with almost 600,000 people living in poverty. One in five children in BC is still living in poverty, according to the recent *Child Poverty Report Card* from First Call: BC's Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. It's clearly time for a different approach.

So, this holiday season, let's seek to make a bigger difference. Food banks may be necessary to address the immediate needs of people living with hunger and malnutrition. However, these services can only provide short-term relief for the downstream symptoms of poverty. We need to go upstream and provide long-term solutions that fix the root causes of poverty.

Homeless people will enjoy turkey dinner on Christmas Day, and food bank users will receive a fuller basket during December. But, come January, homeless people will still be on the street, fridges will be empty again, and the season of giving will be over for another year. After decades of these annual cycles of charitable generosity, poverty is still alive and well within our communities.

The fact is that our individual and collective acts of generosity are simply not enough to rise to the challenge of ending the poverty in our midst. Food bank use is on the rise with over 100,000 people per month seeking help. But charities cannot cope with the increasing demand on their services. Poverty is a heavy issue and we need everyone to share the weight. Giving to charity is the community's way of stepping up -- now we need to ask government to share the weight with us.

We need a comprehensive poverty reduction plan with legislated targets and timelines to make a real difference for families, communities and our province.

A poverty reduction plan would rebuild the social safety net that is supposed to help people get back on their feet but increasingly holds them down. It would tackle the chronic hunger experienced by so many in our province. It would boost the incomes of low-income households and reduce the costs of needed services, like childcare. It would tackle the unaffordability crisis facing so many of us in this province by investing in housing. It would address our education system and provide for the basic needs of the poorest students who cannot learn until they are adequately housed and fed. It would meet the community health care needs of low-income seniors, and people with disabilities, mental illness and addictions.

The call for a poverty reduction plan is now coming from all quarters. Most recently, the government's own Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services has recommended the implementation of a poverty reduction plan for the fourth year in a row. Earlier in the fall, a strong collective call for provincial action came from local governments with 24 municipalities passing resolutions in support of a poverty reduction plan for BC with legislated targets and timelines. And the Union of BC Municipalities has unanimously passed resolutions in support of this call since 2009, most recently on September 28 this year.

You might think it will be too expensive. But we all pay for poverty through higher public health care costs, increased policing and criminal justice costs, and more social service funding. Purely on economic grounds, it actually makes sense to tackle poverty directly rather than to continue to pay out year after year for its long-term consequences. The cost of poverty in BC is 8-9 billion dollars while a comprehensive poverty reduction plan is only half that at 3-4 billion dollars. We need to stop mopping up the water on the floor and fix the hole in the roof.

You might think poverty is here to stay. But there's nothing inevitable about poverty. BC is now the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction plan. Other places in the country have a strategy or are in the process of developing one, and many are already seeing success. They are saving money and lives by tackling the issue of poverty head-on.

So, next time you drop off some cans at the local food bank, consider doing something that will make an even bigger difference. Think about giving change.

Write to the Premier and ask her to commit to a poverty reduction strategy that includes legislated targets and timelines, so that it's dependable, effective and accountable. It's a sound investment for our province, our communities, and ourselves.

And, if you think that sounds too political for you, you should recognize that giving to charity is also a political act. An act that supports the government not doing enough, an act that says you're ok with things the way they are.

But are you? -- **Trish Garner**

Trish Garner is the Community Organizer with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition.

Visit givingchange.ca to support the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition and its member groups that work tirelessly to tackle the root causes of poverty and make a meaningful difference in people's lives. For more information, visit bcpovertyreduction.ca.

The Lower Island NEWS

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As others see it

It's time for a meaningful increase to BC's minimum wage

By Iglia Ivanova

BC's lowest paid workers got a 40-cent raise September 18. The latest increase of the provincial minimum wage—now \$10.85 per hour for most workers—isn't much to celebrate. It works out to an extra \$16 per week for someone working full-time – and that doesn't stretch far in a province with such high cost of living.

In fact, minimum wage workers continue to earn less than the poverty line even if they work full-time 52-weeks a year.

It's not just minimum wage earners who face the threat of working poverty. Making a dollar or two above the minimum wage is still a poverty wage for a full-time, full-year worker. Even three dollars above the minimum wage barely clears today's poverty line for a single person, and falls short of the poverty line for a single parent with one child.

Critics like to argue that the minimum wage doesn't matter for working poverty because too few people earn exactly the minimum. But they seem to forget that nearly half a million British Columbians—a quarter of all paid employees in the province—work for \$15 or less per hour. And they would all benefit from a \$15 minimum wage.

Some people mistakenly believe that low-wage jobs are filled mainly by teenagers and youth who work part-time after school, live with their parents, and are on their way to a better-paying job after graduation. But Statistics Canada data reveal a very different reality for the low-wage workforce earning less than \$15.

The majority of BC's low-wage workers are adults between the ages of 25 and 64 (53%). Few are students (21%). Most are supporting a household (58%). And most are women (58%).

The majority of low-wage workers also have full-time jobs (59%), and just over half work for corporations with more than 100 employees.

And while there is some truth to the belief that for youth, low-wage jobs are a stepping stone to higher-paying careers, many low-wage workers over 25 face a real risk of getting stuck in their jobs with little opportunity to earn more. Almost half of BC workers over 25 who earn less than \$15 have been in the same job for longer than three years (45%).

Studies also indicate that recent immigrants and persons of colour are likely to be overrepresented among the low-wage workforce.

BC's economy relies on these workers but it's failing to provide them with a path out of poverty. The consequences are far reaching: from chronic stress and health

problems to poorer school performance for children – and, fundamentally, lost human potential. At the end of the day this isn't just a problem for low-wage workers and their families – it affects us all.

It's also why a growing number of cities in the US, including Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles are moving to a \$15 minimum wage. Washington DC, New York State and California have also approved gradual increases to reach a \$15 minimum wage, and a number of other states are considering similar measures.

Closer to home, Alberta's provincial government officially passed regulations to raise the minimum wage to \$15 by 2018, and is eliminating its lower "liquor servers" wage.

Any proposal to increase the minimum wage by any amount seems to be met with dire warnings of massive job losses and impending economic doom. But neither history nor academic research supports these claims.

Just last year, the CCPA published a report by UBC economics professor David Green, whose analysis indicates that the likely impact of a \$15 minimum wage on job losses would be much lower than feared. His research found that the overall benefits of meaningfully raising the minimum wage through a series of staged increases would far outweigh the costs.

A \$15 minimum wage would significantly boost the income of low-wage workers as a group and, unlike today's small minimum wage increase, would be enough to lift full-time workers out of poverty.

An often-overlooked benefit of higher minimum wages is that they make low-wage, high-turnover business models more expensive, thus creating incentives for employers to offer better, more stable jobs.

The evidence is clear: sticking with BC's poverty-level minimum wage just doesn't make sense.

Iglia Ivanova is a senior economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and author of *Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver*. See more at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/its-time-meaningful-increase-bcs-minimum-wage#sthash.xTZeqoS.dpuf>



Getting beyond self interest

By Dale Perkins

Very early on in my work-life I learned to expect people to act according to their self-interests. Once self-interest became the ground-rule for people's actions, then you knew why they worked at and dedicated their time and energy towards a particular job or occupation, and what were their important relationships. Then we knew what was really going on. Self-interest became the standard principle we put in place within our society or as it commonly got expressed – "knowing what's in it for me?" (or the polite phrase -- "enlightened self interest")

Most of the time this core mantra became ensconced inside a few self-revealing proclamations, although other nobler reasons would take over and become the rationale we presented publicly, such as: we did "it" for the sake of our children and family, even our country and world. At a very deep level we felt it unseemly for us to admit to having self-interests – we would rather be known for acting out of a sense of "noble principles" for ourselves and our community.

Certainly when I worked as a community organizer, I was schooled to be on the look-out for other people's self-interests. That became my primary "modus operandi" as an organizer and acted as my "litmus test" for judging whether I was doing my job well. The challenge was to locate the self-interests of the folks I met and attempt to pull them together and form organizations and associations. If I located their self interest, and those happened to be the same self interests as their neighbours in the building or city block, then I thought I could expect them to come together and work to resolve the problems in their group and realize that when they acted in concert with others they could achieve the desired results.

Also I understood that should I not locate people's self interest then I had nothing to work with. Reflection would come later, or to state the obvious -- the pedagogy for an organizer was always "Action-Reflection", i.e. get them acting first and reflection would come latter.

This was completely the opposite to the approach I was expected to take working inside the institutional church. That is, people were expected first to reflect on the core teachings and doctrines of the church, before they were considered ready to act together. The pedagogy of the church was "Reflection-Action".

We were instructed to expect people to participate in reflecting on the message and teachings of the Christian church. Once they understood and accepted those principles and teachings then they were ready to act together on the goals and objectives of the church. However, we were very clear – if people were not instructed on what the message/gospel was then we

would never have confidence that their actions and behaviour were in accord with the institutional church's principles. The pedagogical norm for the Church was always "Reflection-Action".

As a consequence we expected young people/youth before they joined the church to attend "Confirmation Classes" or at least Sunday School before they were permitted to enter into full membership in the Church. That is, once they learned the proper teachings of the institutional church, then we could be assured they were ready to act as a follower of Jesus.

What was very difficult for people in my church to accept were persons who were obviously of sound mind wishing to enter into full membership inside the church and yet they had little knowledge of what the Christian faith was all about. We didn't know whether or not we should receive them before they undertook certain courses and classes.

In fact, it was often embarrassing when we met a "Non believer" who acted more "Christ-like" but who hadn't gone through the process we'd established for church membership. I remember the introduction of a Muslim man to a church gathering from a priest of that church, saying that "so and so" was more of a Christian than most of us. And that Muslim man wasn't jettisoning his Muslim faith, nor was he attempting to convert into a Christian community.

What the priest was pointing out was the truth that the man's behaviour was more in keeping with the essence of the Christian faith than most of us regular Christians could express.

How could the priest say that, we wondered, since this Muslim man hadn't done the necessary reflecting before he acted? Certainly, the common assumption carried by the institutional church is that should someone attempt to enter the Christian church from another faith tradition, it was absolutely essential for them to be instructed in the doctrine and dogma of the church, prior to them being received into full membership.

What is incongruous for me are all those stories from the Christian Scripture describing how those early disciples of Jesus joined his fellowship. That is, they were simply invited to join him and follow his way – whether they were schooled Jewish folks, or completely uninformed individuals, that didn't seem to matter. They were invited or called to follow in his way, and they acted without Jesus first requiring that they reflect on a number of principles.

Only later did those disciples reflect on what they had done, and why they decided to "hitch their wagon" (as it were) behind Jesus. Some of them reflected in quite different ways from how others reflected. Nevertheless, the prescribed pedagogy then was always "Action-Reflection".

How is it that the institutional church

has always insisted on it operating according to the opposite paradigm?

What strikes me as a probable answer is the way we have allowed the essence of the Gospel to be determined by people's reflections and beliefs. That is, what began as a movement focused on the collective and the way to enhance the common good of the community, has become calcified into becoming a way to take care of #1 – our individual needs and aspirations.

Personal salvation has triumphed over social and community well-being. Whether that was the result of allowing another ideology to squeeze out the essential core message of the Gospel, or simply giving up on connecting with others who share this planet with us.

However it came to be over time, the pedagogy of the institutional church became identified with individual self-interests. And as a consequence the notion of there being a "bedrock" for followers of the way of Jesus to locate and follow the common good was relegated to the shelf of political theory.

Those who would declare the need for attending to the good of the whole community became identified as communists or socialists. And in this continent in particular we've seen how that label has been pasted onto those political leaders who even suggest that we all need to pay attention and respond to others, and especially to others in need.

Very quickly that morphs into labeling those "others" as not as worthy to become members of the dominant group. And consequently racism and ethnic stereotyping happen regularly. We see that expressed in Technicolor in this current US American presidential race. Certain people, by virtue of their color, sex, or racial heritage are not bona fide members of our community who must be given the same degree of consideration as the regular individuals in their society.

First we're expected to look after No 1 and make oneself stronger and great again. And if each individual did that then the entire country would be stronger. However, what about those who don't qualify as deserving individuals? And what about the whole community?

It is becoming more and more evident that rank individualism is threatening life on this planet. With 7 billion of us (and counting) it simply isn't possible to expect everyone to enjoy the benefits of the planet IF we hold onto the notion that there inevitably must be disparities among us.

As all the statistics scream out (to those with ears that can hear), we cannot tolerate a handful of multi-billionaires to amass wealth, when the rest of the human race must accept very few resources – and I'm not talking about TV sets or cell phones. We're talking about potable water, shelter and food – basic survival items.

For instance, we cannot permit a particular baseball player to receive \$30 million a year (with a seven-year contract under his belt, equaling \$210 million) when millions of people survive on \$1 per day. That's obscene and simply not acceptable.

However, such things happen when we allow self-interests to be the crowning attitude celebrated by us North Americans. We desperately need to return to a common attitude and belief in the Common Good. That won't be easy, because we've been so indoctrinated into a culture of individualism. We only think it noble and generous of us to give token nods towards others and the Common Good.

Nevertheless, if we hope this planet might continue to sustain life for all of us humanoids and all living things, then we must be prepared to accept the credo of the Common Good, and replace the mantra of rabid individualism which has our society by the throat.

Dale Perkins is a retired church minister.

How do we deal with this?

We've just had another good thumping as a result of the US election this past month. I never dreamed the unhinged candidate for the Republican Party would be elected President and I bet few of you did either.

We lost the last provincial election, we lost the federal election, those of us who admire Tom Mulcair lost him as leader and now this unspeakable man is President-elect of the United States.

If it seems like we've been hammered, you're right. And there's more to come. Trump is unstable. If you're following him on twitter @realDonaldTrump you can see him taunting and flaunting like that eight-year-old on the school playground, the one that bullied you. Trump can't control himself, he can't think and he reportedly doesn't read. As a result he is going to make decisions that hurt. You already know that, but what you may not have considered is how he will hurt you right here in Canada.

Yes here, in Canada. He has already unleashed the racist and sexist hounds. His comments and his failure to school his followers has opened a Pandora's Box that cost tens of millions of lives to close last time it was unlocked.

You can see it in the Conservative Party of Canada leadership campaign; you can see it on the streets of Abbotsford, a place the KKK has been comfortable in; you can see it in the emboldened attacks on the Alberta NDP, and you can read it on the posters plastered all over an Ontario neighbourhood the other day. So that's one problem.

Problem number two is the environment. Welcome back KXL Pipeline! The Prez wants you and every other pipeline, coalmine and fossil fuel source back up and running as soon as possible and that means trouble for Canada's environment and for First Nations. It has Christy Clark clapping her hands with glee.

Another problem that you may not have thought of is the effect Trump will have on your personal finances. His plans are going to negatively affect pension funds, destroy

stocks, create trade battles that are lopsided against Canada and as you know, he only plays by one rule: he must personally benefit from any decision.

Yes we're in big trouble.

We can't fix it all, but we can work on our backyard. We need to elect a strong bread and butter government in BC; a government that uses both heart and mind to make laws that keep children safe, well-fed and properly housed. We need a government that thinks about us every day because they came from us and they know what we face.

John Horgan is the son of a courageous single Mom. He knows about hunger and poverty and the struggles of a teenager that wonders why the world is so unfair. Jodie Wickens is the mother of an autistic son. She knows why our education system has to include trained teachers aides, support staff and medical referrals. Melanie Mark is a First Nation's woman and mother. She knows what First Nations women and families need to make their lives safer. Lana Popham: farmer, small business person. George Heyman: environmentalist, union leader. David Eby: human rights lawyer. Gary Holman: Islands Trust rep to CRD, experience with the fisheries aspect of treaty negotiations.

Every one of our candidates brings personal experience and connection to their communities to the table.

They have serious work to do to get elected, but they can't do it without us. Now is the time to pledge that you will take a sign, volunteer on the campaign, host a coffee party, donate and donate again. If you're serious about this election your next move is right here: www.bcndp.ca

Sue Stroud
Brentwood Bay



Friends of the Lower Island News

As the end of 2016 fast approaches, we look back on a tumultuous year, and indeed an almost terrifying month, as we watched Donald Trump win the presidency of the United States. Surprisingly we have had few comments so far about what this will mean for Canadians, and the world, but no doubt there will be plenty for us to print in the months and years to come.

In order to do this, we have to keep this paper financed, which is an on-going challenge. 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. Our rates are very reasonable.

Apart from our advertisers, an important source of financial help and encouragement are our wonderful donors, whom we can't thank enough for their help.

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

Richard Creech	\$50
Christine McCarthy	\$30

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 can't take credit card donations or give tax receipts. Thank you!

Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year to all our readers.

Dale Young, Editor, for the Editorial Board

Brave New World

By David Olsen

While collective shudders -- or euphoria -- reverberated around the world when Donald Trump became President-elect of the United States, the world was no different on the day before or the day after the US election. The issues that propelled Donald Trump towards the White House had been there for a long time, not just in the United States, and they are going to be around for a long time to come. What has happened is that they now have a focus, in one of the world's most powerful offices.

The emotions, anger, alienation, and other factors in US society that were used by Trump to win the presidency are also exploited by the wave of would-be authoritarian right wing demagogues such as Marine Le Pen in France, Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson in the UK and a host of others in Europe and around the world.

It has been suggested that we are at the start of a new era which could last a very long time, generations perhaps. We had imperialism, communism (so-called, but it wasn't really), globalization and now it seems, populism and authoritarianism.

We have perhaps deluded ourselves into thinking that because we cast a vote every so often (frequently a choice between the lesser of a number of evils) we have a "liberal" democracy. Well, recent events -- not just in the US -- should have disabused us of that quaint idea, if we still cherished it. In a few countries, including Canada to a certain degree, the concept holds true, but in much of the world it assuredly does not.

People in Russia vote in elections but the result is a foregone conclusion. Standing as a candidate in places like Russia and China can be downright dangerous if you are not endorsed by the ruling clique. In the US, unless you can raise millions of dollars, it can be next to impossible to get elected, and it is getting that way in Canada and other countries.

Back in 1949 George Orwell warned us where we were heading, in his novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*. One review described the novel as being set "in a world of perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance, and public manipulation, dictated by a political system under the control of a privileged elite of the Inner Party, that

week we hear of police and security apparatuses seeking to justify increased intrusion into our lives. The scenes at Trump election rallies were reminiscent of the adulatory chanting organized by Big Brother and the thought police in Orwell's chilling view of the world to come. Going to rallies and chanting "U-S-A, U-S-A" does not make a liberal democracy.

In some respects the world is now a more dangerous place than during the cold war. There is a new *realpolitik*. The lure of "strong leaders" with the inevitable trappings of authoritarian rule is proving increasingly irresistible to people weary of the failures of those who claim to be the standard bearers of democracy.

The threat to democratic, socially responsible and inclusive societies is greater than it has been for a generation and there are no quick fixes. Social divisions, nationalism and populism are everywhere. Democratic institutions need a root and branch overhaul and it would be a good idea to start right here in Canada.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appears to have an obsession with maintaining a class system. For the last couple of years he has extolled the virtues of the "middle class" -- whoever they are. Even when speaking at the UN in September, he went on and on about it. Speech after speech extolls "the middle class and those who aspire to join it" as though it were some sort of exclusive club.

One is reminded of ex-British Prime Minister Ted Heath more than 40 years ago who, during a TV discussion panel which had fixated on the "middle class", said "I don't understand what this conversation is about, I don't belong to any class -- I'm just a citizen of the UK".

Let us hope that the NDP will eschew any more talk of class -- leave that to Trudeau and Christy Clark.

The whole thrust of the Donald Trump election campaign was about dividing people into classes, ethnic groups, elites, non-elites, and so on. If that's what now defines democracy, then we need a serious re-think. The spillover of these attitudes into Canada is alarming; or rather, since they were already here in a significant segment of the population, the public and visible manifestation of them is alarming.

The Federal Conservative leadership struggle is not helping, as witness some of the extreme views and attitudes which are surfacing particularly it seems from Jason Kenney, Kellie Leitch and others. Leitch's right wing view on "Canadian values", immigrants and refugees should cause particular concern, coming as they do from someone whose day job is a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon for which, presumably, compassion and kindness are prerequisites.

One of Trump's key messages was that he would bring back to America the jobs that have gone overseas, notably to China and India, but not forgetting the millions of garments made in Bangladesh, south east Asia and elsewhere. But, alluring as the message may be it has become an empty promise. The world's biggest steelmaker is now ArcelorMittal of India with China in close contention (Mittal took over Luxembourg/French/Spanish Arcelor in 2006). The American rust belt jobs are never coming back, just as they are not coming back to Canada or Europe.

As technology and the world have moved on, we are looking at jobs that were never in the rust-belts of the world anyway. All kinds of new jobs and skills are developing, in China and elsewhere and because western governments are no longer in control of their own economies, there is nothing they can do about it. It's the globalized corporations who decide where the jobs will go, not Donald Trump, Justin Trudeau or Theresa May.

This why Germany is the country to watch. Why does Germany do so well? For a start, most businesses in Germany are still family owned and the owners have a stake in the success of the business. Then there is education. Germany believes in it and does not force students to load themselves with debt in order to equip the economy with the skilled labour force that designs and manufactures products that are the envy of the world.

Elsewhere, global corporations owned by "investors" (speculators?) call the shots. If the investors think they can get a better persecutes individualism and independent thinking as 'thought crime'.

Well, that sounds familiar doesn't it? Big Brother is truly watching us and every

return somewhere else, they can, and do move their money elsewhere. And when in Canada we have finished flogging off electricity generation, water systems, roads, bridges, hospitals, oilfields and other infrastructure to public private partnerships, we will have reduced ourselves to a commodity.

As UK Green Party speaker on economy and finance, Molly Scott Cato said recently in the *Guardian*, (discussing CETA) "The politicians who have mindlessly repeated the growth and trade mantra have become aware that those whose votes they require, no longer see these deals as working for them." Hence the success of Trump who will probably see the transatlantic (TTIP) and transpacific (TPP) trade deals dead in the water. Indeed a majority of EU countries are decidedly lukewarm about TTIP.

As for CETA, well, it has happened, but 28 (eventually 27) EU governments have to ratify it, and that may be a tall order, with a raft of elections coming up in Europe and Theresa May and her three Brexiteers (Johnson, Fox, Davis) fighting the Battle of Waterloo all over again. As Molly Scott Cato put it; it's not just citizens who are concerned about the way trade deals seize control from democratic governments and put it in the hands of private corporations. The member States themselves are getting cold feet.

On that note, just look at CETA again for moment. In October, the French (Green) Member of the European Parliament José Bové, an anti-globalization activist was detained by Canadian Border Services when he arrived in Montreal to speak against CETA. By the time he was allowed entry it was too late for him to speak. Makes you think doesn't it?

And just go into your local branch of one of BC and Canada's big supermarket chains and pick up their own-brand cooking parchment paper. Where is it made? Finland, from 100% recycled fibres. Now what will CETA do for Canada in terms of this product? Presumably the redoubtable Finns will be able to sell even more of the product in Canada with the tariff free CETA (it is already at a very competitive price). Will Canadian companies be able to out-sell the Finns in the EU? Better ask Christy Clark and Justin Trudeau.

Murray J. Ellis Chartered Accountant

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Victoria Labour Council

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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

Health issues for British Columbia

By Carol Pickup

The NDP should focus on the REAL determinants of health:

- Liveable, adequate income
- Affordable, appropriate housing
- A healthy environment
- Access to health food

"Should we really let our people starve so we can pay our debts?"

-- Julius Nyrere, first President of Tanzania, *The Guardian*, 21 March 1985

- Access to education, health-care, social services, recreation and cultural activities

A new Canada Health accord needs to be developed with the provinces and territories and our First Nations which sees the federal government paying its fair share of health initiatives--the original cost sharing was 50/50. It is now about 17/83 with the provinces picking up the largest cost (Ontario is paying 90 percent and BC over 80 percent). In turn the provinces have down-loaded costs on to local governments especially in BC.

The current proposals by the Trudeau Liberal government are not acceptable.

The *Canada Health Act* must be upgraded to include access to homecare, assisted living, residential care, respite for family caregivers and should include access to care for eyes, teeth and ears. Affordable dental services are especially important because they are a major prevention service and will save money in the long run.

The province is underfunding and privatizing as much care as it can and has not taken seriously the former Ombuds-woman's Report which outlined 176 recommendations to improve seniors living in care facilities.

Public primary health clinics should be set up in BC and across Canada to replace the largely privately owned clinics that now exist (as per the main recommendation in the Report-2002). Clinics like those operated by Dr. Brian Day should be shut down.

BC Health Coalition is in court along with the BC government challenging Dr. Day's clinic in Vancouver. He should have

been challenged years ago.

We had an excellent primary clinic at Hillside Healthpoint which was destroyed by the BC government.

The BC government also destroyed at least five non-profit home support agencies by giving the contract for the entire Capital Health Region to Beacon Services. There are many clients very unhappy with this service and necessary services such as housekeeping have been discontinued.

BC should be supporting a National Pharmacare program (and if possible the 20-year patent on drugs should be reduced to allow less expensive generic ones after no more than 10 years). BC should also increase access to more medications--we have the worst record of coverage under BC Pharmacare.

Eliminate MSP payments.

A National Childcare program
A national Affordable Housing program
A Poverty Reduction program

The means to be able to pay for these programs should be through creating a more progressive and fair income tax system. Large corporations and the wealthy should be paying their fair share.

We could shave billions of dollars by bulk buying of drugs, establishment of primary public health clinics (less use of expensive hospital emergency departments) and addressing the REAL determinants of



The convenient denial of mining injustice

Photostory by Heather Tufts

Imagine living in a small, rural community in Latin America where a Canadian mining company enters your territory without consent, forcibly removes you from your home, pollutes your land and waters and quells resistance with armed, para-military security. How would you respond?

"It's been hard, because it's not easy to bear being spat at in the face, being pushed and shoved, the tear gas, the tussles with the police, and we women having to throw ourselves on the ground. It's tough and it's not easy to bear it, but we do it because we believe in our struggle and in asserting our rights." -- Yolanda Soquel, land defender in San Jose, Guatemala.

The Justice and Corporate Accountability Project of York University has documented numerous troubling incidents of violence associated with Canadian mining companies in Latin America. "Neither the Canadian government nor industry are monitoring or reporting on these incidents," states the report.

This detailed summary called *The "Canada Brand"* published in October 2016 compiles information collected over 15 years and names many of the Canadian mining companies involved with specific examples of violence and criminalization. The United Nations has called for accountability, highlighting the lack of oversight that might prevent or regulate the multiple human rights violations that are frequently reported.

The Canadian government's "brand" however relies on voluntary and non-enforceable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This means that companies are at liberty to develop their own code of operations usually coupled with highly financed PR communications. The government's Office of the Extractive CSR Counsellor which was formed during the Harper regime, does not conduct investigations or sanction companies. York University reports that they could find no evidence that the CSR Counsellor has ever "responded to reports of violence or considered withdrawing Canadian embassy support".

Since 2000, Canada has maintained a National Contact Point (NCP). They promote and monitor multinational companies' adherence to guidelines for responsible business practices developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD.) However in its 15 years of existence, the Canadian NCP has not ensured the provision of remedy or made any significant changes on the ground for affected communities. This suggests another mechanism that is virtually ineffective while serving as a veneer for responsible practice.

In Latin America, many mining enterprises affect Indigenous lands where consultations have been compromised by various forms of manipulation and "free, prior and informed consent," is basically ignored. There is a commonality in how Indigenous land defenders, protesters, grass-roots activist, observers and academic researchers report the incidents of

violence in mining-impacted communities. Community members who oppose a mining project are often subject to violent attacks by armed security and women are especially vulnerable to sexualized violence. The offences are systemic, often resulting in serious injury and sometimes death.

Mining concessions have been increasing at a rapid rate notwithstanding conflicting views about land use, water, territory, culture and Indigenous rights. Canadian diplomacy is seen as a public relations operation for Canadian industrial interests with little regard for foreign or community-based concerns. These enterprises have provoked hundreds of conflicts with powerful, courageous resistance throughout Latin America and beyond.

Many Canadian mines operate in countries with variable or minimal standards of human rights and so lack of Canadian regulations enables free-reign operations

with impunity. Economic interests trump ethics and diversity of tactics are employed such as "assistance" in the drafting of local mining codes to suit Canadian interests. Whereas political and economic engagement is presented as advantageous to developing nations, in countries like Honduras, Mexico and Guatemala the economic and social conditions have worsened after the introduction of Canadian mines.

Another disturbing feature of permissive operations is how Canadian *disclosure regulations* permit large companies to remain silent on violence related to their projects. The only requirement in existing law is that they disclose factors that impact the market value of their shares! The larger companies rarely have to interrupt operations because of local resistance and so it's business as usual without public record.

Junior companies, which are more prone to resistance-induced work stoppages, are required to disclose acts of violence when such interruptions could affect market shares. However the research indicates great variations in the level of detail in disclosure documents. Mining companies can dilute the "facts" with skilful corporate language that lacks oversight so that even legally-required disclosures tend to be minimalist.

"If we cannot see how deeply enmeshed Canadian capital is with the Canadian state and how Canadian interests are considered met when Canadian-based companies are making super-profits, even through violent destruction, we cannot get a sense of how thoroughly things need to change," states Jen Moore at *Mining Watch Canada*.

We often depend on groups like *Mining Watch*, media, NGO's, grassroots activists and academic research to report in more detail about the levels of violence. However it is painfully clear that disclosure laws for corporate enterprises are completely inadequate which has helped propagate convenient denial of a harsh reality.

The vacuum in legislation means that it has been difficult to hold Canadian mining companies accountable in Canadian courts. However members of the Guatemalan Mayan Q'eqchi' community are pursuing legal claims against Canadian mining company HudBay Minerals over human rights abuses at their former mining project in Guatemala.



In Vancouver, Angelica Choc speaks out for justice in the death of her husband.

One of three lawsuits is brought by Angelica Choc who seeks accountability for the death of her husband Adolfo Ich Chaman. On September 29, 2009 Adolfo was shot to death by private security forces employed at the Fenix mining project in El Estor, Guatemala. This civil case was the first of its kind to reach a Canadian court and continues in Ontario. Win or lose, Choc versus HudBay will be used as legal precedent for foreign complainants to have their cases heard in Canada under certain circumstances.

The courts, however usually refer such claims back to the country of operation on the basis of jurisdictional justice. This implies that corporate "justice" aligns to foreign jurisdictions with variable or unenforceable regulations without complying to Canadian standards or laws. Once again, the convenient denial syndrome fuels unaccountability for Canadian mining companies.

A complaint against Tahoe Resources



Protesters display a large sign on the steps outside the Vancouver Court of Appeal where the Tahoe Resources hearing took place

was recently heard in the Vancouver Court of Appeal. The head of their private security Alberto Rotando has been criminally charged in Guatemala after a pre-meditated shooting against peaceful protestors at their Escobal Mine in Guatemala. The case alleges direct responsibility and compliance of the mining company for the violent actions of its private security force.

Without the knowledge of Tahoe Resources, Rotando's telephone conversations had been wiretapped while under suspicion for a prior incident of violence. The wiretap proves that he ordered the shootings of the protestors and then conspired to cover up the evidence. Security video demonstrates that fleeing villagers were shot in the back resulting in many serious injuries.

In 2015 the Vancouver Supreme Court declined jurisdiction over this case stating that the most convenient and appropriate place for such a complaint would be in Guatemala. So the appeal hinges on new information about systemic injustice in Guatemala, arguing that corporate accountability could be more justly rendered by a Canadian court.

In the meantime Rotando fled Guatemala after being released on bail and has returned to the safety of his native Peru. However the Vancouver appeal is a civil claim against Tahoe Resources Inc. while the criminal charge against Rotando remains in Guatemala in absentia. The ruling is expected in about three-six months and if the appeal is successful the case against Tahoe Resources will proceed to trial in Vancouver.

The significance of bringing complaints against Canadian mining companies into Canadian courts can not be overstated. In spite of the lack of corporate accountability legislation, a handful of committed and under-financed legal teams are beginning to challenge the obstacle of "convenient" jurisdictions given to the countries of operation. If they succeed, it will pave a road to mining justice through the Canadian court system in concert with the national lobby for government regulations.

The Canadian Network for Corpo-

rateAccountability (CNCA) has recently released their "draft model legislation" to create an independent human rights ombudsperson for the extractive sector. An ombudsperson would be able to review complaints, initiate investigations and gather evidence in compliance with foreign jurisdictions. Such an ombudsperson would hold the power to make recommendations that might include the withdrawal of existing government support or subsidies to offending companies or the pursuit of other appropriate legal actions.

CNCA hopes to see their recommendations tabled as government legislation. At this point there is no indication that the Liberal government intends to support this proposal. If the government decides to proceed, there are legitimate concerns that they would water-down an already compromised proposal.

This is the moment to challenge the Liberal government to initiate enforceable regulations with teeth for corporate accountability. This must include the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)* so that "free, prior and informed consent," becomes the accepted norm of malpractice prevention.

In the meantime, outspoken complainants like Angelica Choc continue to exist in a dangerous environment. Because of her lawsuit against a Canadian-owned mining project, another attack occurred on her home a few weeks ago. Filing her courageous complaint in an Ontario court presents a real and present danger of repercussion in Guatemala. Finding solutions is urgent.

The expansion of Canadian economic interests in Latin America and elsewhere reveals the cruel face of diplomatic hypocrisy. We exist within a frame of ubiquitous denial while militarized security is the standard of protection for Canadian mines.

So long as Canadian mining companies are free to chart their own course under self-determined CSR guidelines, I say to Canada: NOT in my name.

Langford - Juan de Fuca Constituency Association

Season's Greetings

Contact President Sharon Wilkinson
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Canada-EU Trade Pact, still not a done deal

By Y. Fikret Kayali

The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, barely rescued from the grave, may yet prove to be one of the walking-dead. The signature of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and those of his European counterparts, on the document are, at this point, merely ceremonial.

Before implementation, ratification votes must be held in Ottawa and in 28 parliaments across the old continent. The regional assembly in Wallonia allowed the Belgian PM to sign on because the legality of the Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanism, which permits firms to sue governments over regulations that allegedly affect profits, will first be tested in court.

Canada's trade minister, Chrystia Freeland, frustrated with the Belgian regional parliament that had been blocking the deal, was on the verge of tears as she said, "Canada is disappointed. I am personally very disappointed. I have worked very, very hard. We have decided to go home. I am truly very, very sad," the *Guardian* reported. The head of the European Parliament, however, held emergency talks in a bid to save the deal.

In sharp contrast to Chrystia Freeland, socialists in Canada join millions of people who celebrated the temporary setback to CETA. We restate our commitment to oppose CETA and similar undemocratic, pro-big business, anti-labour so-called free

trade agreements.

Initiated in the Stephen Harper years, and endorsed by Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, CETA has been seven years in the making. It stumbled when the legislative assembly of Wallonia, a French-speaking region with a population of 3.5 million, blocked the government in Brussels from signing the deal. Wallonia's vocal and powerful farmers have been central to the region's objections to the investment protection provisions of the treaty. The deal cannot be ratified without European Union unanimity.

There is deep, widespread opposition to CETA, including by European labour unions, environmentalists and human rights groups. On September 17, 320,000 people marched against CETA and TTIP in Germany. The governments of Romania and Bulgaria have said that they will vote against CETA if Canada doesn't change its visa requirements. Citizens in Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, and Austria have also expressed grave concerns.

In Canada, many social justice organizations, such as the Council of Canadians, have been organizing campaigns against CETA. In June, dairy farmers from Ontario and Quebec drove to Parliament Hill with their tractors to raise concerns about lost income and the slow erosion of supply management, under the proposed deal.

CETA is much more than a trade agreement. It is an arrangement to introduce a variety of capital-friendly changes in areas

as diverse as intellectual property rights, government procurement, food safety and environmental protection, financial regulation, the temporary movement of workers, and public services. It stipulates strong and fully enforceable protections for investors against sovereign governments and their citizens.

CETA would have grave consequences for the Canadian economy and workers. In the first academic study on CETA, economists Pierre Kohler and Servaas Storm show that Canada would lose 23,000 jobs between now and 2023. Using the credible methodology of the United Nations Global Policy Model, this study depicts the flows of non-scientific reports commissioned by the EU and the Canadian government. It shows that: (1) tax income will decrease by 0.12 percent of GDP, as countries would reduce corporate taxes to compete for investment. (2) Workers will lose \$2,656 per person over seven years. (3) Canada's GDP would fall 0.12 percent.

Economist Jim Stanford finds that the trade deal would make Canada's current trade imbalance with the EU incrementally worse. According to Stanford, "the growing bilateral deficit and resulting decline in net demand for Canadian-made automotive products arising from this widening bilateral deficit will negatively affect Canadian production, investment, and employment opportunities." And, under CETA, drug costs to Canadians are estimated to increase by between \$850 million and \$1.6

billion annually.

CETA is very undemocratic. Public consultation about the deal was very limited and the text of the agreement was released late, which severely limited public debate. The deal is also undemocratic due to its pro-corporate regulations about government procurement policies. Currently, Canada's existing commitments covering provincial and local government purchasing under international trade treaties are quite limited. But CETA promises corporations, in the words of Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Scott Sinclair, "unconditional access to government procurement, particularly at the sub-national level... The proposed restrictions on government purchasing would eliminate the flexibility for governments to use their purchasing power to enhance local benefits, even when contracts are competed openly and do not discriminate on the basis of the nationality of the suppliers."

A corporate power grab, CETA can be defeated.

Defeating CETA should be followed by sending other pro-corporate "free" trade agreements such as Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) with China, and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) into the trash bin of history.

Unions, and the NDP (which has been rather quiet on CETA) should take the lead

Here's our take on the Liberal's fall economic update:

By Tom Mulcair

Like a lot of Canadians who are struggling to get ahead, we were disappointed that the Liberal economic update didn't put forward a plan to get Canadians back to work, or even address the ever increasing rise of precarious work—something their Finance Minister thinks we'll just have to get used to! And, we were disappointed that they offered no solutions to help families deal with record levels of household debt, student debt, or to help lighten the childcare burden.

Instead, they introduced an Infrastructure Bank scheme—something they never proposed during the election—that will privatize infrastructure and require projects to pay high returns to private investors—with Canadians footing the bill for these returns through new user fees and tolls!

They plan to take \$15 billion out of existing projects to fund this privatization bank—essentially taking money away from municipalities and infrastructure from taxpayers.

What's more, much of the infrastructure investment they proposed won't get out the door until after the next two elections. On top of all that, they eliminated the \$6 billion contingency fund to pad their numbers! With no rainy day fund, what will they do when the rainy days inevitably come?

But, it's not all bad news. We were encouraged that Liberals adopted the NDP's repeated call to open up the secretive Board of Internal Economy (the

governing body of the House of Commons). And, they embraced our idea to strengthen the position of the Parliamentary Budget Officer and protect it from political interference by making the role an independent Officer of Parliament.

The Liberals also appear to have heard our calls for dedicated infrastructure funding for Rural and Northern Communities; we look forward to seeing the details of their plans for these communities.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON:

First Nations:

NDP MP Charlie Angus, Critic for Indigenous and Northern Affairs, put forward a motion in Parliament to end discrimination against First Nations children. The Liberals initially opposed his motion, but thankfully did an about-face after they were urged by high profile advocates to support it.

We were pleased to see that in the end, they joined us in putting First Nations kids first. We've got to work together to do everything we can to end the systemic discrimination against First Nations kids. We cannot fail another generation of First Nations children.

Proportional Representation:

NDP Democratic Reform Critic Nathan Cullen and Deputy Democratic Reform Critic Alexandre Boulerice are part of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform that has been traveling the country, listening to testimony from Canadians—many of

whom say they are ready for a fair and proportional voting system.

These findings were backed up by Prince Edward Island's recent plebiscite on electoral reform—they supported a mixed-member proportional representation—helping to pave the way for reform at the federal level.

But now, despite calls for electoral reform at Trudeau's own town hall, the Liberals are not respecting their own process on electoral reform. They seem to be questioning what we heard from Canadians and now plan to send a postcard to every household in Canada to solicit responses to their questions about our voting system. We'll continue to push the Liberals to respect their process and ensure Canadians are heard.

Read Nathan's take on PR here: <http://policymagazine.ca/pdf/22/PolicyMagazineNovemberDecember-2016-Cullen.pdf>

Gender Equity:

NDP MP Kennedy Stewart introduced a bill that would have forced political parties to run a larger proportion of female candidates or face reductions in their election refunds which are subsidized by taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the Liberals wouldn't support it: <http://www.ndp.ca/news/liberals-defeat-gender-equity-bill-because-its-2016> For some further analysis, read this: <http://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/the-liberals-killed-a-bill-promoting-gender-parity-in-politics-they-were-wrong/>

Mulcair talks about citizenship

A Canadian citizen facing deportation today has no right to a hearing and has no chance to appeal on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

New Democrats believe it's wrong to revoke citizenship without due process; we want the Trudeau government to live up to their election promise and put an end to this practice.

Instead, the Liberals are choosing to keep some of the worst aspects of the Conservatives' Bill C-24, the so-called *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act*, preventing citizens from having an independent and impartial hearing.

They are aggressively using this uncompromising legislation to revoke the citizenship of roughly 60 Canadians each month—individuals who have no opportu-

nity to present reasonable factors in support of their case, or any hope of pleading for compassionate and humanitarian consideration.

No one is disputing the government's right to revoke someone's citizenship based on fraud or misrepresentation. Liberal Minister Maryam Monsef, who misrepresented her birthplace on her passport application, could find herself in the crosshairs of C-24. Yet, she remains untouched. We think it is blatantly unfair to allow Minister Monsef to stay above the law while other citizens in similar circumstances continue to suffer the severe consequences of deportation without any recourse.

In a recent Op-ed, Jenny Kwan, NDP Critic for Immigration, Refugees, and Citi-

zenship, said, "If the law is being applied equally to everyone, then Monsef could lose her citizenship. She could be among the 60 people who are faced with citizenship revocation this month without procedural fairness or having compassionate and humanitarian factors be taken into consideration."

Canada is a democratic country that boasts of basic rights and equality for all citizens. Our Prime Minister proudly claims that, "a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian". If so, there is no place in our society for a law that creates a two-tier citizenship—a system that makes some of us less valuable citizens than others.

Let's work together to ensure fairness for ALL Canadians.

-- Tom Mulcair, MP (Outremont)

Young Workers:

NDP MP Niki Ashton just wrapped up her cross-country consultations on precarious work. Young people today are facing a precarious job market—one where they are forced to accept unpaid internships and part-time, casual or temporary work. It's hard to build a prosperous future on that kind of uncertainty.

We know that temporary jobs with no benefits don't have to be a fact of life for younger generations, and we're working to change that. More on Niki's efforts here: <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/09/14/mp-niki-ashton-battling-perceptions-of-millennials-teitel.html>

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT:

Actor William Shatner is supporting NDP MP Fin Donnelly's bid to protect our wild salmon: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/captain-kirk-beams-in-to-back-wild-salmon-protection-bill-1.380019>

SHARE:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fin.donnely/videos/10153795064490723/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FinDonnelly/status/785941227678015488>

Youtube version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EhyaOFLhe0>

Youtube French version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jqc1uX_paXI

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NDP.NPD/posts/1163259233710280>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/NDP_HQ/status/793915644823511040

Chief Electoral Officer recommends changes in MacGregor Bill to limit election length

Alistair MacGregor, Member of Parliament for Cowichan-Malahat-Lanford, introduced Bill C-279 earlier this year to ensure that governments cannot set an election period longer than 46 days in order to raise spending limits for campaigns.

On September 28, the Chief Electoral officer recommended a list of changes to our electoral system and specifically cited putting a maximum of 45-50 days on an election period.

"The chief electoral officer agrees with our bill that this change is needed for a healthy democracy to thrive," stated MacGregor.

Canadians are still committed to electoral reform, but the government may not be

By Randall Garrison

The Liberal government was elected under our current voting system and now enjoys all of its benefits as a majority government. Given this, the alarm that many Canadians have begun to sound about the Liberal's wavering commitment to electoral reform is based on a very real concern that New Democrats also share. The Liberals appear to think that Canadian's desire for a fairer voting system has diminished, but my New Democrat colleagues and I can only conclude, based on statements from the Minister of Democratic of Democratic Institutions and the Prime Minister, that it is in fact the Liberals themselves who are no longer committed to electoral reform.

During the 2015 election, 63 percent of voters cast ballots for parties promising to overhaul Canada's outdated, unfair election system. The Liberal government was brought into power on a promise to "make every vote count", and a pledge that 2015 would be the last election under the first-past-the-post system. This commitment was reinforced in the government's throne speech and again dozens of times in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Maryam Monsef.

The Liberals appeared to waiver in their commitment for the first time publicly when the Prime Minister commented to *Le Devoir* on October 19 that Canadian's appetite for electoral reform had only been a symptom of their discontent with the Harper Conser-

vatives. With his own government in power, Trudeau declared that Canadians are happy with their current government and have lost their enthusiasm for electoral reform.

Once outrage began to spread about the Liberals backing down on their very clearly stated campaign promise for electoral reform, Trudeau changed his tune again. He declared himself "deeply committed" to electoral reform, but he modified this declaration by also saying that Canada should be "alert to opportunities to improve our systems of governance and the way we pick our governments". Such a vague statement seems bizarre when Trudeau's government has already spent months working with the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, and I and many other MPs have already hosted town hall meetings demonstrating the preferences of our constituents.

Trudeau's statements, combined with the recent experience of Victoria residents at a town hall hosted by Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef give me cause for serious concern that the Liberal's commitment to electoral reform has indeed dwindled.

Reports from the town hall meeting on electoral reform, hosted by Minister Monsef in Victoria on September 29, clearly show that the opinions of Canadians are being ignored and misrepresented. Attendees reported that the Minister finished the meeting by telling the packed room that she had not registered a single town hall meeting in which a strong consensus for one voting system or another was clear, when, during

that very meeting, the majority of attendees had voiced their support for some form of proportional representation.

My New Democrat colleagues and I became even more concerned about the Liberal government's commitment to the electoral reform process led by the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, following the discovery of a mail program from Minister Monsef. Media reports have shown that the Minister plans to send a postcard to every household in Canada, seeking their response to various survey questions on our voting system, but the Minister's office has admitted that they will not ask about specific options for electoral reform. Again, this seems like a bizarre move when the work of the committee is already very far along and the Liberal's self-imposed deadline for electoral reform, 18 months into their mandate, is looming near.

My colleague Nathan Cullen, NDP Critic for Democratic Reform and member of the committee says that "the Minister appears to be undercutting the work of the Electoral Reform Committee which has been working hard to come to a consensus proposal, but the Minister is forging ahead before we have even made our recommendation."

"Nearly nine out of 10 expert witnesses, and the vast majority of Canadians who have participated in consultations all recommend moving towards a fair voting system which is proportional," said Alexandre Boulerice, NDP Deputy Critic for Democratic Reform. "Are the Liberals preparing to use these vague surveys to justify imposing

their own preference because they don't like what they've heard from Canadians?"

Last week, Fair Vote Canada tabulated the testimony of expert witnesses heard by the Committee and found that 87% recommended Proportional Representation, a system which Minister Monsef has been reluctant to support. Another analysis found that of the 428 Canadian who took part in the Committee's open-mic town halls, 88% expressed support for a voting system which is proportional.

My New Democrat colleagues and I have long supported a move to proportional representation, and we will continue to do so. This is a basic question of fairness: a party that gets about 30 percent of the votes should get about 30 percent of the seats. In a 21st century democracy like Canada's, it's simply unfair that a party that receives 39 percent of the vote in an election should end up with 100 percent of the power in the House of Commons.

Although it appears that the Liberal's commitment to electoral reform has diminished, that is not the case for many Canadians and it is certainly not the case for New Democrats. I believe that Canadians deserve a voting system in which every vote counts and every voice matters, and, as the Member of Parliament for Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke, I will keep holding the government to their promise.

Randall Garrison is MP for Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke.

MP Alistair MacGregor says Canadians want electoral reform that is fair and proportional

OTTAWA – The report that was released October 13 found that 84% of participants want an electoral system where a party's seats in the House of Commons is a fair reflection of the share of votes they receive. This was feedback from over 37,000 Canadians who contributed to consultations on electoral reform held by NDP MPs over the last four months.

Alistair MacGregor, MP for Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, held two public consultations on electoral reform in September asking for members of the public to provide feedback for him to submit to the Special Committee on Electoral Reform. The percentage of respondents wanting change at his consultations were even higher than the national average, with 87% of respondents indicating they believed it is a priority to have the number of party's seats in Parliament reflect the percentage of votes they received, and 85% of respondents believed that having local representative was priority to them.

MacGregor also served as a substitute for the Special Committee on Electoral Reform and travelled with the committee attending public consultations in Atlantic Canada in early October

"After receiving public feedback from my town halls, travelling with the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, and reviewing the NDP's report on our cross-country con-

sultations, it is clear that Canadians want to see electoral reform that is proportional," stated MacGregor. "We need a fair and local voting system where every vote counts equally for the next election."

The cross country consultations also found that 82% of participants felt it was important to keep a local representative and 79% expressed a desire to see collaborative and cross-party support in the creation of a new voting system.

"This provides important and valuable information to the government and the Special Committee on Electoral Reform," said Nathan Cullen, the NDP's critic for Democratic Reform. "It also sets clear benchmarks that a new voting system will need to achieve before receiving support from the NDP."

The report showed a smaller majority of 66% felt that gender and ethnic diversity should be a priority of the new electoral system and only 34% of participants supported lowering the voting age, while 49% opposed.

Chief Electoral Officer Recommends changes contained in MacGregor Bill to limit election length

MacGregor, Member of Parliament for Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, introduced Bill C-279 earlier this year to ensure that governments cannot set an election period longer than 46 days in order to raise spend-

ing limits for campaigns.

On September 28, the Chief Electoral officer recommended a list of changes to Canada's electoral system and specifically cited putting a maximum of 45-50 days on an electoral period.

"The chief electoral officer agrees with our bill that this change is needed for a healthy democracy to thrive," stated MacGregor.

"We have to ensure that governing parties are not extending election campaigns in order to buy elections; all parties should be on a level-playing field," added MacGregor.

"Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better".

--Samuel Johnson 1709-84



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alistairmacgregor.ca



Best of the Season, and a Happy New Year to All!

Please join me at my
Annual Holiday Open House
Monday, Dec. 19, 4-6pm
2904 Tillicum Road

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

Education update:

Education update: BC Liberals continue to create chaos in public school system

By Rob Fleming

Fourteen years of Christy Clark's taxpayer funded courtroom battle came to an end in mere minutes on November 10, when the Supreme Court of Canada issued a decisive rebuke to her government's record of unconstitutional legislative abuse, confrontation, and chaos in our public school system.

BC teachers will feel vindicated for standing firm against 14 years of attacks by Christy Clark and defending fair classroom working conditions that benefit BC children. During the BC Liberals time in power, BC has steadily declined from the second best funded K-12 education system to second last in the country.

In reaction to the court decision, BC NDP Leader John Horgan immediately demanded that the premier apologize to parents, support staff, teachers, and an entire generation of BC children who have spent their time in overcrowded and undersupported classrooms because of her actions. As a result of the win, the Supreme Court of Canada reinstated language in the collective agreement between BC teachers and the government respecting maximum class size and rules about composition.

In Vancouver, families and School Board trustees have been fighting for months to keep schools open in the face of funding shortfalls created by years of BC Liberal government cuts and down-loaded costs. After months of struggling with a bleak funding situation, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) was scheduled to meet to pass a balanced budget. But rather than let the VSB trustees vote on the budget, Christy Clark's government fired the school board mere hours before the vote could take place.

Meanwhile, new documents obtained by a Freedom of Information application and released by the Official Opposition show that Christy Clark's government is making up contradictory policy excuses for why she has delayed -- by up to 10 years -- repeatedly promised school seismic upgrades in communities like Victoria and Port Coquitlam.

At a recent news conference, Opposition Leader John Horgan called on the premier to be truthful and accountable for

her broken promises and asked why her government "told school trustees, parents and kids that their scheduled seismic upgrades were cancelled because it didn't fit with their 'enrollment requirements' when Ministry documents show that these so-called 'enrollment requirements' don't exist? It was pure fabrication."

When Premier Clark promised in 2013 that Shoreline and Minnekhada schools would be seismically upgraded in 2014-2015, she said "Absolutely nothing is more important than keeping our kids safe." Sadly the new evidence shows once more that Christy Clark's government is putting politics first and that schools and child safety in Greater Victoria and Port Coquitlam aren't where her election campaign focus is.

Polls show that a large majority of British Columbians support investment in our schools and want what the NDP is committed to: stable, sustainable and properly funded public education that is there to help all of our kids and families thrive and succeed. After years of underfunding and school disruptions, it's no surprise that students, parents, teachers and support staff do not trust Premier Clark and reject her political timelines dictating their schools. Instead of continued chaos, we need a government that will invest in education.

A strong public education system is the best way to build a better future for our province by giving our young people the skills and support they need to succeed. In our rapidly changing world, well educated, creative, caring citizens are essential keys to success. A strong K-12 system helps build healthy communities, builds the middle class, and provides opportunities, equality and mobility in a prosperous society.

In May 2017, voters across British Columbia will get their chance to vote for positive change, strengthening our school system and finally ending a decade and a half of decline and derision of public education under Christy Clark and the BC Liberals.

Rob Fleming is the NDP MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake and the Opposition Spokesperson for Education. He is also the proud dad of two school aged kids in public education

MLA Report:

Aboriginal children in foster care deserve more, better care

By Carole James

On September 30, I had the privilege of attending events at the University of Victoria and Camosun College for Orange Shirt Day. This campaign, in its third year, aims to raise awareness of our shameful history of residential schools in Canada, and the importance of implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The origin of Orange Shirt Day started in Williams Lake, BC in 2013. It grew out of Phyllis (Jack) Webstad's account of having her shiny new orange shirt taken away on her first day of residential school, and it has become an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for future generations.

While I am proud we are finally acknowledging our history, it is critical that we move beyond words and start taking real action. Deepening poverty in Aboriginal communities, a lack of recognition and respect for First Nations title, especially in regard to resource development, graduation and employment rates, and the lack of action on reducing the number of Aboriginal children in foster care, are all critical issues that we face as a province.

The number one call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was for provincial governments to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care. Yet, almost a year and a half later, the BC Liberal government has still not addressed this over-representation in our foster care system. We still have a situation where 60 percent of children in care in BC are Aboriginal, and no real plan from the government to address these numbers and the challenges they represent.

The 2016 service plan for the Ministry of Children and Family Development calls for the number of Aboriginal children in care to be reduced by just 0.5 percent, or 24 children -- leaving more than 4,390 Aboriginal

children in government care. Saying this target isn't good enough would be an understatement!

And it's not just that children are being removed from their families, home communities and culture -- which is concerning enough -- but once we do, we're not giving them the kind of care we would demand for our own children.

A disturbing recent report from the Representative for Children and Youth found that children and youth in government care are being sexually assaulted and abused at a shockingly high rate -- in fact it is the single most reported critical injury of children in care. And Aboriginal girls are 4 times more likely to be the victims of sexualized violence in care before the age of 12 than other children.

And once foster children turn 19, they are expected to manage and be independent, without connections to their families and their communities, and with little continuing ministry support. Too many vulnerable youth are then caught in a seemingly endless cycle of poverty, homelessness, mental health issues, crime and substance abuse. We must do better by these children, and it is clear that so much more work needs to be done.

I am so proud to stand with Leader of the Official Opposition, John Horgan, to support his announcement that a government under his leadership would adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and implement the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

It's time that as a province, we work together to heal relationships, revitalize communities and build a province that's stable and rich and healthy.

I'm looking forward to taking on that difficult work to the benefit of all British Columbians.

Carole James is MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill.

We need real action to make BC affordable

By Rob Fleming

I've been hearing from British Columbians that affordability, especially housing affordability, is their biggest concern. The 0.6% vacancy rate and rising cost of rentals are making it harder for residents to make ends meet, and the rampant real estate market is putting the dream of owning a home out of reach for many families.

British Columbians are feeling squeezed, and they are telling me that the Christy Clark government isn't doing enough to make BC affordable.

To bring residents together to discuss the affordability crisis, I held a town hall on housing unaffordability in partnership with MLAs Lana Popham (Saanich South) and Carole James (Victoria-Beacon Hill).

The event brought together community members, affordable housing advocates, innovators, and policy makers to look at what we need to do to make BC affordable. Renters discussed their dismay with skyrocketing rental prices, seniors and families shared how over 50% of their income is often going towards housing, and students expressed their frustration at the lack of student housing being built on campuses. Young families explained how they are being squeezed out of the housing market, and home owners expressed how they want their neighborhoods to be diverse communities, not property investments.

Presenters confirmed that these problems are widespread and offered ideas for addressing the housing crisis. Marika Albert from the Community Social Planning Council gave an overview of housing in Victoria. She discussed how we need to ensure British Columbians can earn a fair wage and ensure there are adequate housing options available to people at all income levels. Kristi Fairholm Mader from Ready to Rent discussed the importance of education to provide renters with the skills

and knowledge needed to secure stable housing. Then Jake Fry from Small Housing BC discussed options for building affordable housing, meeting rental demands, and densifying cities.

David Eby, MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey, spoke to the New Democrat Opposition's ongoing work in the media, in the legislature, and in BC communities. He outlined how government could take real, comprehensive action to increase housing affordability. There are countless options, from taxing real estate speculators, to allowing universities to build residences, to pursuing incentive programs to boost affordable rental stock.

Frustratingly, to date the Christy Clark government has taken little action, and has largely ignored the crisis. The 15% lower mainland foreign buyers tax they put forward this summer was a half-measure and poorly implemented, meaning it is easily avoided by foreign speculators and targets too many people it shouldn't. Even worse, the government has not redirected the resulting windfall into housing where it is desperately needed, but has instead put it towards general revenue. What we need now is immediate investments in affordable housing, policies that will encourage the development of more rental properties, changes to the *Residential Tenancy Act* to prevent fixed-term leases and renovations, and policies to restrict foreign speculation in our property markets.

Thank you to everyone who attended our town hall on housing or reached out to my community office. We will keep bringing forward your stories and calling on Christy Clark's government to do the right thing. It's time British Columbians had a government they could count on, that works to ensure everyone can afford to live in the community they call home.

Rob Fleming is MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake.

Wishing you a joyous holiday season!

Please join me at my

Holiday Open House

Monday, December 5, 4-6 pm at my Community Office

Everyone welcome. Light refreshments.

Non-perishable food and personal care items will be gratefully accepted for the Mustard Seed Food Bank.

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
 PROVINCE OF
 BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Electoral and governance reforms in BC

By Gary Holman

The 2015 federal election has put electoral reform on the front burner in Canada. The federal Parliamentary Committee examining Electoral Reform will make its recommendations to the federal government by year end, with government's response expected next spring.

As Official Opposition spokesperson for Democratic Reform in BC, I want to make clear our commitment to making electoral reform an issue in the 2017 provincial election.

In 2013, only 24 percent of eligible voters and less than half of the people who cast ballots, voted for the current Liberal government, which under the "first past the post" (FPTP) system, holds 100 percent of the power in the legislature. The Official Opposition loses every vote on virtually all of our legislative proposals, regardless of how constructive or strongly supported by the public. The Green and Conservative parties received 13% of votes in 2013 but

between them have only 1% of the MLAs.

This means that the FPTP system leaves more than half of voters in BC with zero power in the legislature. The unfairness of our system is a key factor underlying voter cynicism and declining electoral participation.

The Official Opposition believes British Columbians should be asked to move to a system of proportional representation (PR), some form of which is used by over 80 countries in the world, including parliaments like our own in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and New Zealand. There are different types of PR systems, but they all ensure the proportion of seats each party wins in parliament reflects their share of the popular vote.

British Columbia has already voted twice on a specific PR system -- Single Transferable Vote or STV. The 2005 referendum resulted in 58 percent support (just shy of an arbitrary 60% approval threshold), but the second referendum in 2009 had the opposite outcome. The contrary results of

two referenda suggest a clearer mandate from voters is necessary to proceed with electoral reform.

One approach to a referendum question that could be considered here, was taken by New Zealand, first holding a referendum on whether to move to some form of PR. The specific type of PR could then be decided by government based on public consultation. The threshold for success also must be a clear majority (not an arbitrarily high threshold), and government must support the referendum and subsequent consultation process with comprehensive and objective information, possibly under the auspices of Elections BC. If voters approve, an NDP government will hold the 2021 election under a PR type system.

In BC, there is also strong public concern about the undue influence of "big money" in politics. The Official Opposition believes we should ban political donations from corporations and unions, and place limits on personal donations, all of which are in place at the federal level. We also

would reinstate spending limits on political parties during the 60 day pre-election period and place government advertising under the auspices of the Auditor General of BC. We would ban government advertising altogether in the four month pre-election period.

My colleagues and I have also introduced more than a dozen bills during this term -- none supported by the BC Liberals -- to make government more open and accountable, including legislation to make spring and fall legislative sessions mandatory, empower legislative committees, initiate early voter registration for youth, and strengthen rules to ensure transparency of lobbyists, government's "duty to document" policy decisions, and prevent conflicts of interest.

We can, and must strengthen our democratic institutions in BC. However, since the BC Liberal government has refused to even consider democratic reforms in the legislature, it appears the only way such reforms will happen is to change government.

Gary Holman is MLA for Saanich North and the Islands and New Democrat spokesperson on democratic reform.

Standing up for Esquimalt-Metchosin

By Mitzi Dean

I am humbled to accept with gratitude the nomination as the BC NDP candidate for Esquimalt-Metchosin. These are big shoes to fill, I know. Maurine Karagianis and Moe Sihota, Frank Mitchell, Ray Rice, Randall Garrison, and so many other New Democrats have stood up for this community for decades. And now I am deeply honoured for this opportunity to follow their exceptional example of public service, and build on their amazing work.

I am also indebted to the wonderful team in our constituency who are already working hard to put together the winning campaign that will ensure we hold this seat next May. We're all dedicated and determined that the BC Liberals won't see this seat again -- and that we will win government. I've been working my entire life to strengthen our communities, and feel that I can best serve the community as part of a John Horgan NDP government.

In my role as executive director of the Pacific Centre Family Services Association over the last 10 years, I've seen firsthand the issues caused by the problems of affordability in our community. We serve families across the constituency and see every day how many are struggling to make ends meet in spite of all their hard work and long shifts.

Leading a community service agency, I've been challenged to survive cutbacks, build services, answer urgent community needs and speak up for those who need help but sometimes don't know where to turn to get it. As John Horgan put it at the Better BC rally on November 20, it's time for a government that makes the right choices for people.

Housing and child care are the two biggest costs facing families in Esquimalt-Metchosin, and parents are paying some of the highest child care fees in the country. Too many cannot find child care and spend years on waitlists.

John Horgan's BC NDP team will put the needs of parents and their kids first,



Mitzi Dean

and that's why he has pledged to work towards a \$10-a-day childcare program that will ensure quality, affordable childcare is available to all parents.

Our children deserve better. I am ready to stand up for public education and fight for schools for urgently needed seismic upgrades, proper school lunch programs, and top-notch supports for teachers, parents and staff.

Government must do much more on housing, and we must do much more to help families and children living in poverty, our seniors and persons living with disabilities. Citizens are having trouble finding housing, and when they do find something, it is often too expensive.

MLAs should be in the Legislature in the fall sitting right now so that government could be introducing measures to deal with the crisis in housing, and affordability. But the Premier cancelled the sitting, and so the people's House sits empty.

That's just not right.

To just make ends meet, many people in my community are working full time or several jobs. Students, parents, seniors, new Canadians, and new workers in every part of the economy are paid minimum wage, and it's not enough.

Christy Clark has chosen to keep minimum wage in BC one of the lowest in Canada. A John Horgan New Democrat government will raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in the first term. We can grow a sustainable economy, defend our environment and create new jobs for a liveable future.

The people who live in Esquimalt-Metchosin are amazing. They are hard working, caring community-builders who deserve a government that cares. They deserve an MLA that will stand up for them at the Legislature, and will work to make sure their voices are heard. I want to be that MLA.

I hope you will join with my team and ensure our victory on May 9, 2017. Please visit my website at www.mitziidean.ca, and follow me online:
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/MitziDeanNDP/>
Twitter: @MitziDeanBC

Bill Routley, MLA
Cowichan Valley



Community Office Hours
Tuesday to Friday
10:00 am - 3:00 pm
273 Trunk Road,
Duncan
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PO Box 599
Duncan BC V9L 3X9

Holiday Open House



Maurine Karagianis, MLA
ESQUIMALT-ROYAL ROADS
Wednesday, December 21
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
A5 - 100 Aldersmith Place
Light snacks and refreshments will be served.
Please bring a donation of non-perishable food for the Esquimalt Neighbourhood House.
Info: 250-479-8326 / Maurine.Karagianis.MLA@leg.bc.ca

John Horgan, MLA Juan de Fuca

Season's Greetings!

My best wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy, healthy holiday season!

john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca | www.johnhorganmla.ca
250-391-2801 | 122-2806 Jacklin Rd. (at Jacklin & Goldstream)

James runs again in Victoria-Beacon Hill

Carole James may be the best known face in Victoria-Beacon Hill. She grew up there, raised her two children there, and still lives in the constituency she's represented in the BC Legislature since 2005.

"Whether it's the outrageous decision to claw back bus passes for people with disabilities, cuts to education, or making life less affordable for the families of our community, Christy Clark's government has proven they don't care about the pressures people are facing," she said. "I am committed to fighting to change that."

"Carole has an incredible commitment to making sure everyone shares in BC's prosperity," said NDP Leader John Horgan. "She works long and hard for better schools, health care, seniors care and af-

fordable housing. I am thrilled that she is running again in Beacon Hill."

James was first elected to the legislature in 2005, and again in 2009 and 2013. She was Leader of the Official Opposition from 2003 to 2010 and now serves as Opposition Spokesperson for Finance.

Her long history of public service includes five terms as president of the BC Schools Trustees and 11 years on the Greater Victoria School Board.

A foster parent for 20 years, James has two children and two grandchildren. She is married to Albert Gerow.

Gary Holman, MLA
Saanich North and the Islands

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www.GaryHolmanMLA.ca

MLAs in the community



Rob Fleming, MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake, and Carole James, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill, were joined by veteran Joe Halverson at the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Cenotaph November 11.



MLA Rob Fleming celebrates Diwali with the India-Canada Cultural Association.

**WISHING YOU ALL THE BEST
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!**

*From the BCNDP Victoria-Swan Lake
Constituency Association*

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New Democrats**

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by mail to PO Box 8523, Victoria, BC V8W 3S1
or visit our new website at
<http://victoriabeaconhill.theorem.ca>

Cowichan Valley matters

By Ian Morrison

Cowichan Valley NDP constituency members gathered on Sunday, October 16, to hold the group's Founding/AGM at the Duncan United Church. I was honored to be named the new constituency association president.

First off, I would like to briefly introduce myself. My name is Ian Morrison and I've been a licensed Mutual Fund representative in the financial services industry for over 20 years. I was elected to public office as the Cowichan Valley Regional District Director for Cowichan Lake South/Skutz Falls in November, 2008. I'm entering my ninth year serving the residents of my Electoral Area and the fine people of the Cowichan Valley. I was the Campaign Manager for MLA Bill Routley's successful re-election in 2013. I sought the nomination to replace Jean Crowder in the new Cowichan-Malahat-Langford Federal Electoral District and have served as the Cowichan Valley NDP Vice President since February, 2015. I'm a member of the Cowichan-Malahat-Langford federal NDP executive and serve as the CML rep on the South Island Regional Council.

Our MLA, Bill Routley, announced his retirement from politics just before Labour Day. This triggered the "unofficial launch" of the campaign to replace him. All who know "Brother Bill" will admit he's one of a kind and irreplaceable, yet he made his intentions clear and that meant the race was on.

Committees have been struck and candidate searches began in earnest. We were informed the "Equity Policy" was mandated to apply to the Cowichan Valley for this election cycle, despite considerable opposition from the membership and the executive in the Cowichan Valley. The BCNDP has informed me that five individuals from equity seeking groups have expressed interest in running for the nomination and four of those have submitted applications (as of November 10) for the party to consider through the vetting process.

As I write this column, the NDP's vetting process is underway and is anticipated to be completed towards the end of November. The Cowichan Valley executive had hoped to begin a schedule of four all candidate forums, beginning the third weekend of November through to the week ending December 12. Now, time may only permit hosting three all candidate forums, after vetting has been completed and the list of approved candidates has been determined.

At time of writing, the dates of the forums has not been determined, but three are being planned for the first two weeks of January. Members will be notified ASAP, so that anyone interested can meet and hear the candidates, prior to voting on January 15.

Curiously, the Cowichan Valley Liberals have recycled their failed 2013 candidate and the Greens have appointed a relative political newcomer. Both the Liberals and Greens didn't have nomination races. Each party had just one single interested prospect that was unopposed and therefore acclaimed to the position of candidate, without facing a single debate question or vote from their party membership.

In other news, constituency presidents from across the province were invited to attend the NDP Provincial Council meetings in Vancouver, from November 18-20. I joined our Cowichan Valley Provincial Council Delegate Tom Harkins for all three days. We discussed the election game plan and the path forward to win government in



Ian Morrison

May next year. We all know the Liberals have a huge war chest to spend on the next election. New Democrats don't. One lesson learned from the surprising US Presidential election was that you can outspend your opponent, be leading in almost all the polls, have almost all the media predicting you'd win, have a superior "get out the vote" ground game, and you can still lose the election at the voting booth.

Please take note of these important upcoming dates.

Cowichan Valley MLA Bill Routley and Cowichan-Malahat-Langford MP Alistair MacGregor will be jointly hosting their annual Christmas/Holiday gathering at 273 Trunk Road in Duncan, on Friday December 2, from 4-7p.m.

If there are any latecomers interested in joining the Cowichan Valley nomination race, the deadline for submitting completed nomination packages is December 16. I strongly recommend that if anyone believes they qualify and is still considering running, apply immediately! Contact Jordan Reid at jordan.reid@bcndp.ca.

The Cowichan Valley NDP Nomination Convention will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2017, at Cowichan Secondary School, 2652 James Street, Duncan, BC, from 11a.m to 4p.m. Only new members whose applications were received by October 17, 2016, and members in good standing, present at the Nomination Convention, will be entitled to vote for their candidate of choice. Absentee or mail in ballots will not be available.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this article, the nomination race, the provincial election, or anything else of interest to you in the Cowichan Valley. I can be reached by email at morrison.director@shaw.ca or by phone at 250-710-1227(C).

I'm no activist!
I just know the difference between
Right and wrong
That it's not okay to tell a Muslim
a Mexican or anyone else
That here, they don't belong.
I'm no activist--
I just always believed in
America's diversity,
our red, white and blue--
Purple, pink, periwinkle,
and all the other colors too.
I'm no activist--
nor a poster child of heroism;
But I cannot close my eyes to the
"Patriotism" disguised as racism.
I'm no activist--
but history tells us how it started with
the Jews;
Yellow stars,
then railroad cars,
and finally furnace flames of a red-
orange hue.
I'm no activist--
but I will not stay quietly in my seat;
And watch as a nation tears itself apart
By making mistakes we vowed never to
repeat. -- **Ana Toombs**, an American activist with Pantsuit Nation Pennsylvania Chapter.

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Canadian Marine Engineering gets ready to tow the derelict vessel Viki Lyne II.

Abandoned vessel Viki Lyne II finally removed from Ladysmith Harbour

LADYSMITH — It was a very long time coming, but an abandoned vessel that was a blight on Ladysmith Harbour for four years is finally gone.

"I am so glad I could help get the Viki Lyne II removed from the Ladysmith Harbour," said Sheila Malcolmson, MP for Nanaimo-Ladysmith. "This is a big step for this harbor, after a lot of community work. I'll keep working with the federal government to develop a comprehensive abandoned vessel solution for our whole coast."

The Viki Lyne II was towed away by Canadian Maritime Engineering Limited on the morning of Thursday, October 6. It's destined for Nanaimo, where it will be safely dismantled in accordance with federal and provincial regulations.

"This is a big day for our community," said Ladysmith Mayor Aaron Stone, who was thrilled to see the vessel towed away. "However, these piecemeal solutions that put stress and hardship on communities from coast to coast are not sustainable. We continue to repeat our call to the federal government to implement a permanent solution to the blight of derelict and abandoned vessels on our coastal communities."

"It still amazes me that it has taken over four years to have this vessel removed, after a Coast Guard-commissioned survey declared in June of 2012 that the sinking of the Viki Lyne II was imminent," said Rod Smith, managing director of the Ladysmith Maritime Society.

"It speaks to how flawed the process is, and how great the need is for immediate change. I am just thankful that MP Sheila Malcolmson, her predecessor Jean Crowder, St'uminus Chief John Elliot, Mayor Aaron Stone and others kept this file front and centre. We now appear to have a federal government that is willing to look at changes to the process of handling abandoned vessels. I hope this spirit of cooperation continues and that real and lasting change is imminent."

Malcolmson has proposed a regulatory solution in Parliament that would give the Coast Guard more authority to deal with abandoned vessels. Bill C-219 will be debated in Parliament next year.

To find out more about Sheila Malcolmson's abandoned vessels bill, go to <http://sheilamalcolmson.ndp.ca/sheila-malcolmson-tables-abandoned-vessels-bill>



Broad smiles are on the faces of Sheila Malcolmson, MP for Nanaimo-Ladysmith, Rod Smith and Ladysmith Mayor Aaron Stone, as they watch the abandoned vessel Viki Lyne II being towed from the Ladysmith Harbour.

Abandoned vessels need action, not more words

OTTAWA — After years of pushing for action on abandoned vessels, New Democrats supported a motion in Parliament October 26, but noted much more is required to address the hundreds of vessels that are currently abandoned on Canada's coasts.

"I am happy to see the government agree that abandoned vessels pose economic and environmental risks, but coastal communities need more than statements of good intentions," said Sheila Malcolmson, NDP MP for Nanaimo-Ladysmith. "Unfortunately the non-binding motion passed today doesn't go nearly far enough to create a process for dealing with these vessels."

The Private Member's motion from a backbench Liberal MP does not legally

compel the government to take any action or create any new mechanisms for dealing with abandoned vessels. Meanwhile, Malcolmson introduced legislation in February that would make important changes to streamline the process and reduce the burden on local governments and taxpayers.

"After more than a decade of inaction by successive federal governments, it's time to create real solutions so we can get to work cleaning up and protecting our coasts, waterways and harbours," Malcolmson said.

Malcolmson's action plan for abandoned vessels, Bill C-219, is set to be debated next year.

Teale Phelps Bondaroff elected president of Saanich-Gulf Islands federal NDP association

Members of the federal NDP riding association of Saanich-Gulf Islands elected Dr. Teale N. Phelps Bondaroff as their new president at the Annual General Meeting last August.

Phelps Bondaroff is a Saanich resident where he lives with his partner Stephanie Ferguson (Victoria-Swan Lake vice-president and Saanich-Gulf Islands member-at-large). Together they run a consultancy, The Idea Tree, which specializes in supporting environmental organizations and non-profits with research, strategy and communications. Their clients have included World Animal Protection Canada, The Black Fish, the Sea Ranger Service, Elfinstone Logging Focus, and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Phelps Bondaroff is just returned from Turkey where he helped launch the Sea Shepherd's new custom-built patrol vessel, 'Ocean Warrior,' for which he was instrumental in securing the funding, as well as from presenting at a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) symposium on illegal fishing in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Phelps Bondaroff has a PhD in politics and international studies from the University of Cambridge, and BAs in international relations and political science (honours) from the University of Calgary. He is an expert in the strategy of environmental organizations and illegal fishing. Phelps Bondaroff is an active researcher and is currently investigating (among other things), the strategic use of international law by non-state actors, illegal fishing and slavery, and cyber vigilantism.

Phelps Bondaroff has been involved with the NDP for over a decade; in that time, he has served on several riding association executives, attended numerous provincial and federal conventions, volunteered on campaigns, and stood as a candidate. He ran as the federal candidate in Calgary West in the 2006 and 2008 federal elections, and as a provincial candidate in Calgary Bow in 2008. More recently he served as the EPC chair for Saanich-Gulf Islands in the 2015 federal election and volunteered on Alicia Cormier's campaign. He was also a delegate at the most recent federal convention in Edmonton, and the most recent provincial convention in Vancouver.

His experience in politics includes three terms as an elected official on the Univer-



Dr. Teale N. Phelps Bondaroff

sity of Calgary Students' Union, and volunteering and working with a wide range of non-governmental organizations in Canada and abroad.

Phelps Bondaroff is active in a number of community projects, including the Little Free Library Mapping project with the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network. He also volunteers with the Victoria Tool Library.

For the past two years Phelps Bondaroff has been working as a debate coach at a local school. He remains active in the speech and debate world; he is one of the lead organizers of the BC provincial mock trial competition, is a regular volunteer at local tournaments, serves as a private debate tutor/coach and coaches in Mill Bay and Port Alberni. He is an accomplished debater and was the western Canadian debate champion in 2003 and 2004.

Phelps Bondaroff is currently working with a local team to activate a campaign for universal access to prescription contraception in BC. Those interested in getting involved in this campaign are encouraged to get in touch (Phelps Bondaroffpb@gmail.com).

"I am excited about taking on the role of president of the Saanich-Gulf Islands federal riding association, and am keen to get to work. I am particularly eager to put our strategic plan into action and to grow our membership. Focusing our attention on issues that matter to members of our riding is incredibly important to me, and as such, I would encourage members to get in touch with me to share their views. Expect a couple of phone calls from me now and again to get your views on important issues."

-- Starla Anderson

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wishing you much joy this holiday season *and* all the very best in the new year

Cowichan Valley NDP Constituency Association

Season's Greetings to all!



You can reach your president, Ian Morrison, by phone at 250-710-1227; by mail to Cowichan Valley NDP, PO Box 102, Duncan BC, V9L 3X1; or by email to cowichanvalleyndp@gmail.com

All candidate forums have been moved to the first 2 weeks in January. Members will receive notification.

Tanker ban on BC's north coast long overdue--Cullen

--OTTAWA – An American tug, the *Nathan E. Stewart*, pushing an empty fuel barge along BC's Central Coast ran aground and sank the morning of October 13, causing 200,000 liters of diesel to leak into critical and sensitive areas. If the tanker barge had been full, the damage would have been much worse, with NDP MP, Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley) calling it a "least-worst-case scenario."

"British Columbians are waking up today, imagining if this had been a fully loaded super tanker, and thinking about the devastation it could have done to fishing resources, First Nations communities, and our environment," Cullen said. "They're

wondering why their prime minister hasn't yet acted on his solemn promise to protect our coast."

In November of last year the Trudeau Liberals promised to implement a moratorium on tankers for BC's North Coast, the prime minister even included the commitment in his mandate letter to the Minister of Transport. But over the last year Liberals have met with Enbridge 77 times and recently federal officials have gone silent.

"This should be the Liberals' final wake-up call," said Cullen. "It's time for this government to come through on their promise made to British Columbians. It's time for a permanent crude oil tanker ban on BC's North Coast."

Union of BC Municipalities opposes old-growth logging on Vancouver Island

VICTORIA - Mayors and councillors from across BC passed a motion September 28 to formally oppose old-growth logging on Vancouver Island.

The motion, championed by Metchosin Councillor Andy MacKinnon, was returned to the UBCM's resolutions list after initially being removed. MacKinnon and other municipal leaders reversed the removal, and around 80 percent of delegates from across the province voted in favour of the motion.

"This is an excellent first step, and I'm really pleased that municipal politicians across our province have chosen to support this resolution," MacKinnon said. "Now it's time for the provincial government to take action on this – our opportunities to protect the last tracts old-growth rainforest decrease by the day."

The motion is applauded by the Wilderness Committee. The group urged the public to ask their municipal representatives to support the motion, and rallied outside the convention to highlight the public desire for old-growth protection.

"When we look for leadership on old-growth rainforests, it often comes from municipal governments and First Nations. This is the boldest statement yet," said Torrance

Coste, Vancouver Island Campaigner with the Wilderness Committee. "It's time for the government and the Official Opposition to catch up and start respecting local voices on this."

The motion was co-championed by Victoria City Councillor Ben Isitt, who also participates in Island Forest Futures, an initiative that advocates a transition to sustainable second-growth forestry on Vancouver Island. Isitt and MacKinnon both presented at a public event hosted by Island Forest Futures in Victoria in September.

"Regional governments and First Nations are far better positioned to manage local forests," Isitt said. "We need to reject liquidation of the last stands of old-growth rainforest and embrace sustainable management and community tenure of second-growth stands for value-added jobs, biodiversity and drinking water protection."

A similar motion was passed in May by the BC Chamber of Commerce, which coupled with the UBCM motion highlights community and business opposition to destructive old-growth logging in threatened areas like the Walbran Valley, East Creek and Mt. Elphinstone.

The UBCM will now urge the provincial government to take action to protect remaining old-growth.



About 20 of Victoria's most active citizens gathered at the Spirit of the Republic on November 11 to hear messages of peace and remembrance at the open mike. Here are (left to right) Judy Ilan, Alison Acker, Art Farquharson and Anne Moon with the memorial in the background.

Kinder Morgan could inflict political damage on Trudeau Liberals

VANCOUVER -- A new poll by Insights West shows strong opposition to increased oil tanker traffic on British Columbia's south coast, especially among voters who supported Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party in the 2015 federal election.

The province-wide online poll of a representative provincial sample, commissioned by Dogwood Initiative, found British Columbians remain opposed to oil tanker expansion by a factor of two to one. 64 percent of respondents who voted Liberal in 2015 agree, while just 27 percent support more oil tankers.

"Many British Columbians believe the approval of the Kinder Morgan project would go against the current prime minister's campaign pledges on climate change and relations with First Nations," said Mario Canseco, vice president of Public Affairs at Insights West. "This includes a majority of those who chose to support the Liberal Party in last year's federal ballot."

Two-in-five voters in Metro Vancouver, where the majority of Liberal seats in BC are located, said they would be less likely to vote Liberal next election if the federal government approves Kinder Morgan's pipeline and tanker project. Fully 31 percent of Liberal voters say they would be less likely to support Trudeau's party if the project goes ahead.

Dogwood campaigner Sophie Harrison says the damage to the Liberal brand in BC could last for years. "Justin Trudeau's government was brought to power by a surge in youth voter turnout and a consolidation of

the progressive electorate. If he approves Kinder Morgan's Texas tanker proposal, a lot of that support is going to collapse."

Harrison added: "In the coming days, we'll be looking for more Liberal MPs in BC to follow Terry Beech and Ron McKinnon's lead, speaking out on behalf of constituents who oppose this project."

Details of the polling results are available at <http://info.dogwoodinitiative.org>. Other highlights include:

- 62 percent of British Columbians polled agree a Kinder Morgan approval would contradict Prime Minister Trudeau's promises on climate leadership and a "new relationship" with First Nations. Among Liberal voters in BC, 58 percent agree with this assessment.
- 74 percent of British Columbians and 78 percent of Liberal voters in BC say they are less likely to support oil tanker expansion when considering the impacts on the South Coast's 80 resident orca whales.
- Among young voters in B.C. (under 35), opposition to oil tanker expansion overwhelms support four to one.

Dogwood Initiative is B.C.'s largest citizen group, with 260,549 contactable supporters in the province. If the federal government approves the Kinder Morgan expansion, Dogwood organizers are committed to launching a province-wide initiative petition to block provincial permits for oil tanker projects.

The polling was conducted online from November 17 to November 21, 2016 among 805 adult British Columbians, and has been statistically weighted according to Census figures for BC. The margin of error is +/-3.5%, 19 times out of 20.

New study sheds light on most effective approach to basic income

OTTAWA—As Canadian governments, including the province of Ontario, move forward with basic income pilot projects, a Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) study reveals a federally run negative income tax model is most effective approach.

The study simulates eight potential basic income models and concludes that a federal negative income tax which shrinks in value as incomes rise — so that it's targeted to lower income individuals and phased out for the rich — is more effective at poverty reduction than providing an identical transfer to everyone.

"Canada already has 33 federal and provincial income support programs that are forms of basic income," says the study's author CCPA Senior Economist David Macdonald. "What is clear is that replacing existing income supports with a single, equivalent cost, basic income would either substantially worsen poverty or plunge seniors into poverty in order to lift adults and children out of it."

Among the study's key findings:

- Canada already has 33 basic income programs that send money with no requirements and no strings attached, such as provincial sales tax credits and Old Age

Security (OAS).

- Creating a 34th program which ensures that all Canadians receive a basic income of \$10,000 a year, but phases out as incomes rise, would cost \$14.5 billion and would reduce poverty by 2.4 percentage points.

- Such a program would most benefit middle-aged adults who live in poverty, but it would have less impact on children, those under 30, and seniors living in poverty.

- Going even further with a basic income program designed to completely eliminate poverty in Canada would cost between \$49 billion and \$177 billion a year in new spending, depending on the clawback rate.

"There is no magic bullet to eliminating poverty," Macdonald concludes. "Poverty reduction requires multiple targeted solutions. Basic income programs can be a part of the mix, but increased wages, lower unemployment for youth, and better financial support for seniors also have to be part of the deal," Macdonald concludes.

A *Policymaker's Guide to Basic Income* is available for download on the CCPA website: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/>

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When it comes to elections, always expect the unexpected

By Jonathan Lee

The US election result is the product of many increasingly disadvantaged people in the US affirmatively expressing, by voting or abstaining from voting, their distrust of a cynical and ugly political and social system. The result has enabled the possible prospect of an even uglier system and governing administration.

In October, just prior to the November election, this writer had the opportunity to spend 10 days in Washington, DC. The visit was a chance to compare notes, American and Canadian, about what the future would hold under the presumed US president in waiting, Hillary Clinton.

The certainty of Clinton's election seemed to be a "done deal". The repellent campaign rhetoric seemed to have drowned out most constructive discussion. For many, the seemingly endless election campaigning had become a bore. Ironically, even in Washington DC, the capital city of the United States, where it might be imagined that election fever would be running high, there seemed to be no sense of urgency or change, for better or worse. Through the nightmare of election noise so many people seemed to have taken the opportunity to tune out and take a comfortable nap.

Now so many of those same people have awoken to what might be a continuation of the nightmare through which they were trying to sleep.

The unexpected election result reminds that we must always expect the unexpected. If pre-election times reflected voter

fatigue, so post-election times seem to reflect voter panic for at least 50% of the US population and possibly, also, a significant percentage of the developed world's population.

It's time, now, to understand the lessons that can be learned. If the new US administration is sincere in its stated objective to serve the disadvantaged, restoring incomes, opportunities and jobs, then it must be supported in those goals by all people of goodwill.

It's a difficult but not a hopeless cause, as the following thoughts will signify.

The writer, Aaron Benjamin, is a banking and finance lawyer based in Charlotte, North Carolina. He was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec.

Charlotte, N.C., is one of the most politically controversial places in the US. North Carolina is a state where hardline, entrenched conservative political ideas and philosophies collide and clash with progressive and liberal agendas. The conservative approach prevailed in the November election.

I met with Benjamin during my time in DC.

After the election results were clear I asked Benjamin for his thoughts as a resident of Charlotte, NC, a successful professional and a Canadian familiar with the dynamics of US and Canadian cultures, commerce and societies. His thoughts do inspire an optimism that many who find only gloom at the moment, might keep in mind as we try to find ways to make lemonade from this lemon of an election.

A Canadian living in the US talks about the US election

By Aaron Benjamin

"Last night [November 8] was not the result I expected or desired. It is frustrating and disconcerting that such a large percentage of the country, including some of my friends and colleagues, rejected values that I hold to be just and important.

This was an unusually ugly campaign with many racist and sexist elements, both implicit and explicit. But I am unwilling to write off almost half the country as racist and sexist on the basis of their vote for president.

I have friends, colleagues and co-workers who voted for Trump and I do not consider them to be racist or sexist. I believe them when they say that they do not intend that their vote for Trump and Trump's election as president result in an increase in racism and sexism in our society.

I take them at face value when they say that they hope and expect their vote to result in a country that is better for all Americans.

I fear that they are wrong but I hope that my friends are right and I am wrong in this prediction. But those who were my friends yesterday will continue to be my friends today and tomorrow.

General elections are complex and the motivations of the electorate are something that people a lot smarter than I am spend their careers trying to predict and better understand.

But it seems to me that the November 8 result is an indictment against both mainstream parties' multiple failures to address the concerns of millions of Americans over many election cycles.

I think imputing motives of racism and sexism to people that do not self-identify as racist or sexist is counter-productive and, applied generally to wide swaths of America, is as presumptuous and unfair as any generalization applied to any group of people.

I live in a pretty comfortable liberal bubble of privilege, and the assumptions, comforts and silent benefits that go with that are things that I have only recently begun to examine.

I suspect that there is also a level of economic and cultural privilege, not based on gender, sexual orientation or race, that can help explain the results of this election and of which I have not been aware of or examined.

I will not be packing up and moving back to Canada. This country has been my home for 18 years. For the next four years I hope for more common understanding, not less.

As President Obama urged after the election, I hope for more unity, not less. I don't expect this from our elected politicians, but I hope for and expect it from my friends, my neighbours, my co-workers, my colleagues and my various communities.

After the shock subsides, I plan to keep investing to make my community a better place. I will obtain my citizenship so that I can make a contribution to the political process supporting the candidates and causes in which I believe. I will continue my involvement with the Global Woman PEACE Initiative and assist them best I can in helping with the goal of ending female genital mutilation in the United States and worldwide.

I will get more involved with the Ballantyne Jewish Center and I look forward to helping them best I can with the contribution they make towards Judaism being more available and accessible in my community of South Charlotte and Union County.

And I will do my best to instill in my children the values I hold dear and do my best to raise them to contribute productively and enthusiastically to their communities and their generation.

I hope that the President-elect succeeds, as George H. W. Bush hoped for Bill Clinton when he transferred the presidency in 1993. And I sincerely hope, as President Obama hoped, that our country is even better in four years time than it is today."



Waiting at Washington DC National Mall for the Global Women P.E.A.C.E. Foundation's award ceremony to begin are (left to right) Kristin Hoffman, singer and creator of the FGM WALK 2016 anthem; Sayyidah Garrett, humanitarian, G.W.P.F. keynote speaker; Diane Walsh, investigative journalist and activist; and Susan Gibbs, humanitarian.

Independent investigative journalist, Diane Walsh, receives an internationally recognized award for her work on FGM

On October 15, on the Washington DC National Mall, in sight of Capitol Hill, *Lower Island News* writer, Diane Walsh, received a certificate of recognition from Angela Peabody, the executive director of the Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation, for Walsh's years of work promoting international efforts to eradicate the practice of Female Genital Mutilation – FGM.

The award reads: In Recognition for Advocating and Covering FGM/C Globally

Walsh's reporting of this barbaric practice has been published in *Lower Island News* and other newspapers over the past 10 years.

It's a practice that is outlawed in Canada and most western countries, and by UN resolution 2012. It is through the work and vigilance of reporters and activists internationally, that the threat of FGM to young girls is now closely monitored and criminalized in western countries.

Walsh's work has been outstandingly valuable in raising the consciousness of the harm of FGM during her visits to the UN in New York and Geneva, Washington, DC, and to the UK in London and Edinburgh, Scotland.

In her presentation of the certificate, Peabody thanked Walsh for her contributions in raising awareness on an international level, and encouraging effective, unified consolidation, coordination and communication between anti FGM organizations around the world.

Walsh particularly mentions the hard work of organizations such as Educate to Eradicate, in London, UK, and Global Alliance against FGM in Geneva, Switzerland,

who are now working in partnership with Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation.

While appreciative of the recognition that Peabody's organization has conferred, Walsh stresses that there is so much more work to be done in removing this scourge, and that countries must continue to be vigilant in ensuring that increasing numbers of young girls are protected from the threat of FGM.

Revolutionaries for the climate's future

Emmanuel De Guzman, secretary of the Climate Change Commission (CCC), likened the fight against climate change to the Philippine Revolution.

He urged other member states to continue being "revolutionaries fighting for the planet's future" and end the record-setting temperature increases the world has experienced in the past few years.

"Like them (the revolutionaries of the Philippine Revolution), we, too, are fighting for the future ... for the fate of the entire world and the billions of people who call our planet home," De Guzman said.

"This is a revolution we in the CVF must lead because we are the countries that will fall first if the 1.5 degrees global warming limit of the Paris Agreement is breached," he said."

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P.E.I. residents send Liberal government strong message in favour of PR

On November 7, PEI citizens unequivocally voted in favour of a fairer voting system. Unfortunately, Premier MacLauchlan casts doubt on the will of the electorate.

We congratulate the Citizens of PEI for their choice. In a plebiscite that allowed them to rank their preferences for five different options, 52% chose the Mixed-Member proportional system (MMP).

The five options on the ballot included:

- the current first-past-the-post system,
- two reform options that would have changed the existing system only marginally, and
- two forms of proportional representation (PR).

Hours after Islanders voted, the Premier's Office had already released a statement sending signals MacLauchlan's Liberal government may choose to ignore the results of the non-binding plebiscite, calling it "doubtful".

As Fair Vote Canada Vice President and PEI campaigner, Brenda Oslawsky, says, "The hypocrisy is stunning. This is the second poll of its kind in PEI. In 2005, 33% of PEI residents voted to keep the status quo. That result was applauded by the government. The turnout was lower than Monday's plebiscite -- but this time, the government is using the low voter turnout as an excuse to do nothing."

The PEI Liberals received only 41% of the popular vote in last year's election. They have a very doubtful mandate to question the choice of a majority of voters.

PEI has had a history of lopsided legislatures in which the opposition has had only a handful of seats in the legislative assembly. The MacLauchlan government launched the current process after the 2015 provincial election, which saw the Liberal Party taking two thirds of the seats based on 41% of the vote. The NDP and the Green Party with 11.0% and 10.8% of the vote respectively in that election, won only one seat out of 27 between them (for the Green Party). Recent years have produced three elections in which the opposition was reduced to only one or two seats (1989, 1993 and 2000).

Consistently, Canadians have been calling on governments to modernize our

voting systems so legislatures better reflect what voters say at the polls. Citizens of PEI have reiterated what we have heard across the country this past summer as part of the federal consultation on electoral reform. Yet, the Federal Government claims Canadians are divided.

Fair Vote Canada's Executive Director Kelly Carmichael laments, "Without clear rules or guidelines, empirical data collection or a principled approach, governments can manipulate the results of consultation to provide the answers they want to hear."

Réal Lavergne, Fair Vote Canada president, adds "There may be a variety of reasons why people didn't vote and the premier needs to accept the limitations of the plebiscite process as set out by the Committee on Democratic Renewal."

The results of the plebiscite provide solid evidence that citizens are calling for change in our electoral system and reinforce similar evidence emerging from the federal public consultations process. There is in fact no excuse for withholding change.

Brenda Oslawsky stresses that «a number of high-profile Liberals have come forward in support of the campaign. We hope that the government will act to honour the clearly expressed wishes of the voters».

The Federal Liberals have promised to "make every vote count" -- an important principle, and the slogan of those lobbying for proportional representation.

"Perhaps more importantly," adds Carmichael, "the federal government has promised to do things differently by adopting an evidence-based process supported by broad public consultations. Thirteen prior reform studies and consultations have all recommended proportional representation. The results from PEI add another layer of evidence that citizens want and deserve equal and effective votes."

The results of the PEI plebiscite provide further reason for the federal Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE) to recommend a form of PR and for the government of Canada to honour its promise to make every vote count.

Fair Vote Canada / Représentation équitable au Canada can be reached at 408-283 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, ON M4K 1N2.

Motion to support volunteer first responders marks anniversary of Tofino accident

OTTAWA - On October 25, the first anniversary of the Tofino whale-watching accident where six lives were lost, NDP MP Gord Johns (Courtenay-Alberni) tabled a motion in the House of Commons calling on the government to provide training and equipment to local volunteer first responders.

"In remote coastal communities, residents with local or traditional knowledge of the waters are often the first responders in crisis situations," Johns said, recalling how members of the Ahousaht First Nation were the first on the scene following the capsizing of the Leviathan II and began pulling survivors from the frigid waters.

Johns praised the local heroes of his home town of Tofino, including members of local First Nations, marine tour operators, and local residents whose swift actions prevented further loss of life. He noted the accident in Tofino highlighted the need to provide training and equipment to volunteers, especially in remote coastal communities where response times are longer for emergency services.

"We need to equip our local communities with the proper resources to aid in search and rescue and prevent the loss of life, on top of reopening local Canadian Coast Guard facilities like the Tofino Marine Traffic and Communications Centre in Ucluelet," Johns said. "My motion will support the Coast Guard while honouring those who we have lost as well as the heroes who helped save 21 lives, one year ago."

This motion came a day after members of the Ahousaht First Nation were honoured with Red Cross Canada's Rescuer Award for their efforts surrounding the Leviathan II on October 25, 2015.

Full text of the motion:

"That in the opinion of this House, given the events surrounding the sinking of the Leviathan II on October 25, 2015, and the important role local traditional knowledge played in the rescue of survivors, the government should allocate resources and provide training and equipment to volunteer first responders in remote coastal communities to prevent the loss of life, provide support for the Canadian Coast Guard, and aid in search and rescue."

NDP secures protection for Columbia River wetlands

OTTAWA – NDP MP Wayne Stetski (Kootenay-Columbia) has successfully lobbied the federal government to introduce regulations to keep high-powered motorized boats off the main channel of the Columbia River.

"The need for this kind of protection has been discussed in the Columbia Valley for more than a decade, and I promised voters to get results from the federal government," Stetski said. "I am proud to have been part of today's resolution."

In February, Stetski wrote to the Minister responsible and urged him to restart the regulation process to restrict high-powered

Federal government's Oceans Protection Plan is an act of theatre

Wilderness Committee skeptical of proposed tar sands spill response

VANCOUVER — Spill response measures announced in Vancouver by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Transport Marc Garneau November 7 will not be effective in a spill from a tar sands tanker, according to the Wilderness Committee.

"Seven times the number of tar sands tankers in Vancouver's harbour makes a spill an inevitability," said Wilderness Committee Climate Campaigner Peter McCartney. "Today's announcement doesn't make west coast residents feel any less afraid of Kinder Morgan's proposed risky pipeline project."

A US National Academy of Sciences study shows there is no known way to clean up a spill of diluted bitumen because it sinks into the water column.

Even in a conventional spill, industry considers just 10 to 15 percent recovery a success. Meanwhile, the City of Vancouver places the likelihood of a spill in the Burrard Inlet at 79 to 87 percent over 50 years if the Kinder Morgan pipeline is approved.

"People need to realize response to a tar sands spill is mostly just for show," said McCartney. "Once that oil sinks, it's game over. Nobody knows how to clean it up."

During a spill, toxic and carcinogenic diluent would evaporate and waft into densely-populated areas. Then the remaining bitumen would sink into the water column where it would poison marine life and show up on local beaches for years to come.

"This pipeline threatens our entire way of life here," said McCartney. "Who on Earth would accept that?"

Carbon tax is too little, too late

Tepid action from federal government on global climate crisis

VANCOUVER - Wilderness Committee is glad a national carbon price finally seems on the horizon, but discouraged that Canada's climate action remains far from what science requires.

The federal government's plan would impose a \$10 per tonne price on carbon for provinces who haven't already enacted their own by 2018, which would then rise \$10 per year. This scheme would not require British Columbia to raise its carbon tax until 2021.

"Once again our leaders have put off climate action," said Peter McCartney, Climate Campaigner for the Wilderness Committee. "Most of Canada already lives with an existing or imminent carbon price so this really doesn't change much. It would have to be over \$200 to be effective."

Global temperatures have skyrocketed in 2016, with each passing month breaking a record set the month before. Scientists warn we could pass the "dangerous" two

degree warming threshold by 2050.

"Alarm bells are ringing louder every day, yet our government insists incremental change will be enough," said McCartney. "It's a sad reality that the politically possible is miles behind the scientifically necessary, but this issue more than any other warrants leadership to break those barriers."

Meanwhile, the government continues to advocate for fossil fuel export projects like the Pacific Northwest Liquefied Natural Gas plant and the Kinder Morgan pipeline, despite a recent report that shows current production is enough to break our carbon budget.

"That these projects are even up for a discussion is a sign of the denialism that pervades our governments," said McCartney. "Maybe a price on carbon would have been enough if we had started 20 or 30 years ago but not at the eleventh hour of the climate crisis – it's bringing a rubber knife to a gunfight."

Hunger is worldwide

By Barry Weisleder

Officially more than 200 million people are unemployed, but the real figure is much higher. According to the United Nations, 100,000 people throughout the world die of hunger every day, and approximately 852 million suffer from chronic hunger. This scandalous situation exists in spite of the fact that the world produces more than 1½ times enough food to feed *everyone* on the planet. However, in a world in which 2.2 billion people live on less than US \$2 a day (in 2011), many cannot afford to buy sufficient amounts of food.

At the same time, inequality has increased dramatically. According to the latest OXFAM study, in 2015, the 62 richest individuals in the world possess the same amount of wealth as the 3.6 billion people who constitute the economic bottom half of humanity. But this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Never before has inequality between

the classes and between nations been so great on a global level. According to figures from *Credit Suisse* – hardly a revolutionary source of data – an insignificant minority (0.7% of the world population), representing largely the global capitalist class, owns 41% of the world's wealth. The global middle class (7.7% of the world population) owes together about the same amount (42.3% of the world's wealth). The next 22.9% of the world's population, probably representing a significant share of the working class of the imperialist countries and the middle class of the semi-colonial world, own 13.7%, and the huge majority of the world's population (68.7%) – representing mostly the working class and the poor peasants of the South – own the little which remains, only 3% of the world's wealth.

As Marx pointed out, capitalism in decay increasingly transforms productive forces into forces of destruction. An example of this is the dramatic change in climate and its consequences for many countries and their populations.

Scientists estimate that continuing today's patterns of carbon-intensive energy use, with the resulting changes in climate that this will generate, will cause 6 million deaths per year by 2030. They also warn that "unless strong preventative action is taken, between now and 2050, climate change will push the number of displaced people globally to at least 1 billion."

Another example of the horrific transformation of productive forces into destructive ones is the massive increase in military spending. It amounts to annually more than US\$1.2 trillion for weapons and related systems.

A retired teacher celebrates Supreme Court decision on class size and composition

By Starla Anderson

Retired teachers are celebrating with teachers in today's BC public school classrooms after the BC Teachers Federation's victory in Canada's Supreme Court on November 10.

After hearing arguments from lawyers representing BC's Liberal government and lawyers representing BC's teachers, it took the bench only 15 minutes to rule in favour of the teachers and restore 2001 contract language that included limits to numbers of students in a classroom, limits to numbers of special-needs students in a classroom, and specialist teacher ratios.

I'm one of those retired teachers who are celebrating not only the teachers' victory but also the wisdom of the judges who ruled that negotiated contracts cannot be overturned at the whim of legislators.

I was driving to work on a rainy day in January 2002 when I heard the news that the newly elected BC Liberal government had done exactly that: it had annulled the contract teachers had won after two strikes and after agreeing to accept a zero-percent pay raise in exchange for limiting class sizes as well as the numbers of special-needs students who would be placed in a classroom.

This meant a lot to the majority of teachers, because we knew that all of the students in our care would benefit from these clauses and we were willing to forego a pay raise as well as eventual pension income for their sake.

That contract was especially meaningful to teachers like me who had given a lot of years of attention to those students who needed extra help to complete assignments

and to be motivated to continue to overcome their academic learning challenges. I had implemented adapted programs to help students with language delays and those who simply needed extra time and support to become successful classroom learners. This included over a decade of work with First Nations students who had dropped out of high school and were enticed back with culturally relevant alternative programs.

That rainy January day remains vivid not only in my visual memory but in the physical memory of my whole body. When I arrived at my school, Churchill Secondary in Vancouver, I signed in and went directly to my principal, Gary Little, to tell him that I felt I had been kicked in the gut by my employer—Premier Gordon Campbell's Liberal government—and clearly this government did not care about what any of us in public schools were doing for the children of British Columbia.

As the five-minute warning bell rang, I told Gary that I would be retiring in June; there was no time for a conversation, but Gary's look told me that he understood how I was feeling. In the remainder of that school year, another dozen very dedicated teachers gave Gary the same message that they would be taking early retirement, and he showed them the same empathy.

Of course, the Liberals would not have been at upset at our leaving, as two beginning teachers could be hired for the price of each of us who had considerable expertise earned through both experience and graduate study. For us retirees, it was some consolation that beginning teachers would have a chance to be hired to bring their talents into the classroom. But that is not what

happened.

With declining enrolment and a fixed formula that provided only so many dollars per student despite rising expenses, many beginning teachers who were not on continuing contracts were let go and began their "careers" as permanent teachers-on-call, unless they chose to leave the province or even the country. Or they started their own private tutoring firms to make their living working with the thousands of immigrant students arriving from China and Taiwan.

It happened that Premier Gordon Campbell's wife, Nancy, was one of our vice-principals, and as tensions built in our school she was unfortunately the recipient of some of the fall-out. As time tables were taking shape for the following year and teachers saw the rise in numbers of students that would be entering their classrooms in the fall, as well as the rise in numbers of special-needs students who would have to share an assistant, feelings were raw despite efforts to maintain professionalism in the ranks, and we had to remind ourselves that it was not Nancy but her husband who was making these decisions.

One Monday morning we arrived at school to find that someone had thrown a home-made bomb through the first-floor window of Nancy's office. I don't know if the perpetrator was ever found and charged, but that incident was shocking to all of us and made all of us feel more protective of her despite our feelings towards her husband.

Since that time, most surviving retired teachers have kept alert to the continued struggle for justice that younger genera-

tions of teachers have kept alive through the BCTF.

Like me, those former colleagues of mine with whom I've kept connected are inspired by today's public school teachers, many of whom weren't even around when the original contract was thrown out by Liberal MLAs almost 15 years ago.

At that time, the NDP opposition consisted of only two MLAs, Jenny Kwan and Joy MacPhail, and although they heroically attempted to inspire individual Liberals to vote their conscience, not one Liberal chose to break ranks.

On November 10, 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in a seven-to-two decision that the legislation breaking the teachers' contract, passed by a unanimous Liberal vote in the BC legislature on January 25, 2002, was not only unethical but illegal. Only the two NDP MLAs in the legislature voted against the illegal bill.

I did retire in June 2002 and began a new (unpaid) career as an NDP activist. Since that time, I've worked steadily on either provincial or federal NDP executives, and sometimes both—always with the fire in my gut stoked from that day when I felt brutally kicked.

Like all committed NDP activists, I still have a determination to bring ethical decision-making back to the legislature. And that is what we will do in the next election on May 8, 2017.

Dr. Starla Anderson is a retired teacher who remains committed to the cause of providing quality public education to all children, because they deserve it and because we are all better off when they receive it.

Timeline for the BCTF-BC Liberals battle

Compiled by Starla Anderson

1994: The BCNDP provincial government's *Public Education Labour Relations Act* imposed provincial bargaining on teachers—prior to this, teacher contracts were bargained locally. The BCTF became the bargaining agent for all BC public school teachers while the BC Public Schools Employers' Association (BCPSEA) was created to bargain for school boards.

1996: A transitional agreement reached between the BCTF and BCPSEA "rolled over the provisions that were contained in previous local agreements. Some provincial language was negotiated, including a grievance procedure and a harassment provision."

1998: The BCTF negotiated an agreement directly with the provincial government, including reductions in class size at the K-3 level, staffing ratios for non-enrolling teachers (i.e. counselors and teacher-librarians) and improvements in TOC pay and provisions: "BCPSEA would not ratify the agreement and government introduced it as legislation."

2001: In August, Gordon Campbell's newly-elected Liberal government brought K-12 education under the essential services legislation of the Labour Code. This reduced teachers' ability to strike but when school boards, through the BCPSEA, sought to strip contract provisions concerning the ratio of non-enrolling teachers and erode the class size language of the 1998 agreement, negotiations stalled and teachers began job action after a 93% strike vote. They withdrew from extra-curricular activities and put restrictions on administrative tasks. BCPSEA and the BCTF spent many days before the Labour Board arguing about what job or strike actions would be permitted under the Code while Ministers began to make threats about legislating a contract. With only two NDP MLAs in opposition, Jenny Kwan and Joy MacPhail, the Liberals were confident that they could take whatever legislative action they wished without repercussions.

2002: On January 18, Premier Campbell set a January 25 deadline to reach an agreement—otherwise, a legislated contract would be imposed. On January 27, the government followed through on the premier's threat: "Two pieces of legislation were passed which imposed a collective agreement on teachers and gave the employers their entire bargaining agenda and more. Bill 28, *Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act*, stripped away any and all provisions concerning non-enrolling teachers as well as language concerning class size and composition including the language governing the inclusion of students with special needs. (The legislation also forbade teachers from negotiating these issues in future contracts.) A companion piece of legislation, Bill 27, *Education Services Collective Agreement Act*, imposed a 7.5% salary increase over three years and eliminated ten local teacher agreements in school districts which had previously been amalgamated in 1996 where the local unions had preserved their separate agreements.

"While the government mandated a 7.5% [salary] increase, it provided funding for only the first year's increase and froze the K-12 budget at 2001 levels for the three-year term of the contract. Thus school districts found themselves doing the dirty work of government. Forty-four schools were forced to close across the province and layoffs reduced the teaching force by some 2,000." Teachers protested with a one day walk out. The BCTF filed a legal challenge in BC Supreme Court against the legislation.

2005: Premier Campbell's Liberal government again legislated the teachers' contract, this time with three years of zero wage increases. Teachers protested with an 88% vote in favour of a strike and a 10-day walkout in October followed. When the BCTF defied a Labour Relations Board order for teachers to return to their classrooms, Mediator Vince Ready was called in—77% of the teachers accepted Ready's recommendations.

2006: Finance Minister Carole Taylor offered teachers a one-time signing bonus of \$4,000 per teacher and a 16% salary increase over five years—to 2011. This was the first successful provincial collective bargaining agreement between the BCTF and BCPSEA since

1994 when province-wide bargaining was begun.

2007: The Supreme Court of Canada ruled on the side of BC's health-care unions against the BC government—their collective agreements had been stripped at the same time as the teachers'. This emboldened the BCTF to pursue this route to have the language in teachers' pre-2002 collective agreement reinstated.

2010: The BCTF took its legal challenge to the BC Supreme Court against the legislation that had stripped teachers' pre-2002 collective agreements.

2011: In March, the BCTF and BCPSEA began a new round of negotiations; there was little progress as the government insisted on a "net-zero" mandate.

On April 13, BC Supreme Court Justice Susan Griffin ruled in favour of the BCTF. Justice Griffin stated that the legislation that stripped teacher rights to negotiate class size and composition was unconstitutional. The Liberal government was given a year to restore the pre-2002 language in the teachers' collective agreement but again, the government ignored the ruling.

2012: In March, 89% of teachers supported a strike vote and left their classrooms for three days to protest new legislation imposed by the Liberal government. Bill 22 was a revised version of the 2002 legislation and included a two-year wage freeze. The BCTF and BCPSEA finally negotiated a retroactive deal from 2011 to June 2013 with no salary increase but there were improvements to leaves of absence and a provincial extended health plan. In December, the BCTF submitted a brief to the government outlining potential changes to bargaining structures.

2013: In January, new bargaining structures were agreed upon and provincial bargaining began in February. In June, the government appointed negotiator Peter Cameron and dismissed the BCPSEA board. Teachers, in a province-wide vote, opposed the government's interference in bargaining.

2014: January 27, BC Supreme Court Justice Susan Griffin ruled that the governments' Bill 22 did not address its unconstitutional 2002 legislation and that Bill 22 was also unconstitutional. Despite documents submitted to the court that revealed the BC Liberals intentionally strategized to interfere in the 2011-13 round of bargaining, the government again ignored Griffin's ruling and made an appeal to the BC Court of Appeal.

In May, province-wide rotating strikes began with BCPSEA initiating a "partial lock-out of teachers." In June, BC teachers once again took strike action—historically their longest strike—that only ended in mid-September when teachers and the province signed a six-year agreement. The new contract included a 7.25% salary increase, improvements in extended health benefits and teaching-on-call rates. The government offered a \$400-million education fund to hire specialist teachers and \$105 million to settle retroactive grievances. It also provided both sides with opportunities to renegotiate depending upon future court decisions.

2015: The BC Court of Appeal overturned Justice Griffin's ruling on the side of the government. The BCTF made the decision to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

2016: January 14, the Supreme Court of Canada agreed to hear the BCTF's appeal, and on November 10, ruled in favour of the teachers in a 7 - 2 decision after a 15-minute deliberation. This decision reinstated Justice Griffin's 2014 BC Supreme Court ruling.

Sources: BCTF (<http://www.bctf.ca/AboutUs.aspx?id=18892>) NOTE: All quotes are taken from BCTF documents.

Darryl Dyck, Vancouver Sun: *Timeline of dispute between BC Teachers' Federation and BC government*, November 20, 2016.

Capital and Labour in the British Columbia Forest Industry, 1934-74, by Gordon Hak (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007)

Book Review by Jim Manly

When I told a friend that I was doing a review on Gordon Hak's, *Capital and Labour in the British Columbia Forest Industry, 1934-74*, she remarked, "What a boring subject."

For those of us who grew up, lived and worked in our logging camps, lumber and pulp mill towns, this book is anything but boring. Boom and bust markets, changing owners, seasonal and structural shut-downs, union politics as well as strikes and lockouts created a continuous drama for the workers and families involved.

Although logging, lumber and pulp mills no longer dominate the BC economy as they did in the middle decades of the last century, they continue to play an important role. The changes that took place between the 1930s and the 1970s still impact the social and economic life of many communities.

Hak's book not only provides much helpful information and background on these changes, it also raises important questions about where we go from here.

The period of Hak's study roughly corresponds to what he and other economic historians call "Fordism", named after the system of mass production introduced in the early 20th Century by Henry Ford. This system was characterized by stability, bureaucratic management, standard products, "advanced mechanization and close control of labour". (5)

H.R. MacMillan, the prime example of a Fordist entrepreneur in BC's coastal lumber industry, began his career as a timber cruiser, later serving as the province's Chief Forrester (1912-16).

After procuring lumber for the military during WW I, MacMillan, in partnership until 1927 with a British lumber importer, formed the H. R. MacMillan Export Company in 1919. Using MacMillan's wartime contacts, the company sold BC lumber from other producers to markets around the world. In the 20s it also began to buy other logging and sawmilling operations, to produce its own lumber, a process that increased during the 30s and 40s.

MacMillan recognized that an enduring supply of timber was more important than processing plants for the company's long-term survival; a symbolic example of this was the 1941 purchase of the Shawnigan Lake Lumber Company primarily for its timber while the mill was allowed to run down and eventually close.

In 1951 The MacMillan Export Company joined with its chief rival, Bloedel,

Stewart & Welch to form MacMillan & Bloedel; this later expanded to include the Powell River Company and its subsidiaries. M & B, or Mac-Blo as it was called, thus became the largest forest company in BC

Other large companies, BC Forest Products, Crown Zellerbach, Alaska Pine and Cellulose, Columbia Cellulose, Powell River Company and Canadian Forest Products, followed a similar pattern of expansion and mergers.

Except for Vancouver Island with its huge E & N land grant, most of British Columbia is Crown land. Although companies could not purchase this land outright they were able to use and control huge tracts of land through Forest Management Licences (FMLs,) later known as Tree Farm Licences (TFLs); in return they agreed to what was called "sustained yield."

Small operators felt shut out of this process and could only survive by working as contractors for the larger companies.

In addition, serious questions were asked about influence peddling in the awarding of TFLs by the Social Credit government.

A major scandal developed in the mid-1950s when Forest Minister R. E. Sommers was convicted of accepting bribes in the awarding of a licence near Lake Cowichan and sentenced to five years in prison. However, as Hak notes, "neither the company, which was the apparent briber, nor the government, Sommers' overseers, suffered any serious consequences." (59)

"Sustained yield" was never clearly defined but in practice it meant that old growth would be completely logged off, largely through high-lead, clear-cut logging, and then be replaced by rapid growth monoculture.

The growth of the pulp mill economy, depending upon fibre rather than close-grained timber and replacing traditional lumber and plywood mills, accentuated this practice. I remember loggers commenting that every year they were logging smaller and smaller trees, further and further back in the hills.

Although there had been lumber production in the Interior as early as the 1880s, it developed quite differently. With smaller, less desirable timber, no access to tidewater for easy overseas export, and long cold winters, it depended upon smaller mills that had less capital backing and in many cases were family owned and operated. The Interior lumber industry suffered greatly during the 1930s depression and only began to recover during WW II.

During the 50s "the logic of Fordist capi-

talism" resulted in a number of mergers and expansions and the introduction of pulp mills at places like Prince George, Castlegar, Kamloops and Mackenzie "brought the instruments of mature capitalist exploitation to the BC Interior." (38-9)

Workers wanting Union protection and recognition faced an uphill battle in the BC lumber and pulp industries. Isolated logging camps that were closed to unwelcome outsiders, an active blacklist maintained by the Loggers' Agency hiring office, combined with transient workers, or "short stake artists" to make organizing difficult. Wage cut-backs in the depression along with dangerous working conditions and primitive camp life made for a disgruntled work force.

In the 1920s the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union (ILWU) from Ontario had begun organizing in BC. Early strikes were sporadic and short-lived but in January 1934 Vancouver Island loggers, especially around Campbell River and Port Alberni, went on strike. The strike, which ended in May, won a modest wage increase but did not achieve union recognition and many militants and organizers paid a heavy price in terms of blacklists.

The ILWU briefly merged with the Lumber and Sawmill Workers' Union which had a 2nd class relationship with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners until they withdrew in 1937 to join the newly formed CIO union, The International Woodworkers of America (IWA).

In spite of the 1934 strike's failure and subsequent discouragement, it led to increased awareness and militancy that eventually pushed the IWA to victory after a long strike in 1946.

Many of the early leaders of the IWA and its predecessors were communists and there was bitter controversy between them and members of the CCF (forerunner of the NDP).

In October 1948 a bitter argument over union finances between "Red Bloc" and "White Bloc" broke into the open, resulting in the "Red Bloc" withdrawing and forming the Woodworkers Industrial Union of Canada (WIUC or "Wobblies" as they were called.) A WIUC strike at Iron River was broken when IWA members led by District President Stewart Alsbury crossed the picket line.

Gradually the IWA prevailed, although the WIUC continued in the Kootenays. Many WIUC members were blacklisted—this time by the IWA - which with Union Shop provision in the contract meant that they could not get regular work in the for-

est industry.

Some CCF MLAs like Colin Cameron and Dorothy Steeves looked for "greater government control and even nationalization of the forest industry." After these views were defeated at the 1956 Convention, Steeves commented, "The country... is safe against the onslaughts of socialism. A completely rightest Ex[ecutive] is triumphantly enthroned." (142)

The labour movement in the pulp industry also faced division which has turned out to be more long lasting. The International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers (IBPSPMW), founded in 1909 in the States, organized British Columbia mills in the 1940s.

The suppliant attitude of the International leadership to the companies is shown by the comment by an International representative about a wildcat strike at Prince Rupert: "I feel the company would be well advised to let the plant close down for a while and let our members sweat it out." (234, Note 7).

In January 1963 the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada (PPWC) broke from the International on a platform of local control and Canadian nationalism. A divisive struggle for certification took place in many locals; the International, to try and stop the loss of members, hired Pat O'Neil, a former President of the Prince Rupert local and past Secretary of the BC Federation of Labour.

Among his other activities, O'Neil arranged to have electronic bugging of hotel rooms for an upcoming PPWC convention. When this was discovered, the Province appointed a Commission of Inquiry which "exonerated O'Neil, claiming that the PPWC was so despicable that extraordinary measures were justified." (122)

In the 1970s inflation, increased international competition, unstable oil prices, a "disenchanted workforce protesting tedious jobs," and the need for more flexibility and specialization led to the end of the Fordist era, although this was not always immediately apparent. Although it is outside the period of Hak's study, we can see the results in the closing of several large mills on Vancouver Island and the lower mainland along with the increasing export of logs to be milled overseas.

At the close of his book, Hak has helpful chapters on the way that technological change and the environmental movement have impacted the forest industry, the workers and the communities which depend upon it. This is a helpful book, well-written and researched and anything but boring.

Noted BC forest defender Valerie Langer wins Eugene Rogers Environmental

VANCOUVER – The Wilderness Committee is pleased to announce that the 2016 Eugene Rogers Environmental Award is being granted to Valerie Langer for her decades of dedicated work to preserve and protect the ancient rainforests of coastal British Columbia.

Langer was unable to attend the Wilderness Committee's Annual General Meeting November 19, where she was the recipient of the Eugene Rogers Environmental Award winner. The award comes with a \$1,000 prize.

"Valerie Langer's long-time successful efforts to help negotiate forest protection in BC have been innovative and highly successful," said Joe Foy, Wilderness Committee National Campaign Director.

For 24 years, the Wilderness Committee has presented the Eugene Rogers Environmental Award to citizens who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to protect the environment and advocate for a better society.

Valerie Langer first worked in forest conservation as the Forest Campaigner for Friends of Clayoquot Sound from 1988 to 2004 and was instrumental in the work to defend that region from clearcut logging.

In more recent years she co-founded the group ForestEthics as a coalition proj-

ect and joined the organization as an employee in 2006. ForestEthics is now called Stand.

As part of her work there, she was engaged in implementation of ecosystem-based management in the Great Bear Rainforest, 6.4 million hectares/15 million acres of temperate rainforest on the west coast of British Columbia.

The Great Bear Rainforest was officially recognized by the Government of British Columbia in February 2016, when it announced an agreement to permanently protect 85 percent of the old-growth forested area from industrial logging.

"Forests protect us. They are a living community that provides us with oxygen and defends us against climate change. They house species that impress and delight us. It has been my privilege to help defend them and an honour to receive the Eugene Rogers Environmental Award for doing so," said Valerie Langer of Stand.

Motion to support volunteer first responders marks anniversary of Tofino accident

OTTAWA - On October 25, the first anniversary of the Tofino whale-watching accident where six lives were lost, NDP MP Gord Johns (Courtenay-Alberni) tabled a motion in the House of Commons calling on the government to provide training and equipment to local volunteer first responders.

"In remote coastal communities, residents with local or traditional knowledge of the waters are often the first responders in crisis situations," Johns said, recalling how members of the Ahousaht First Nation were the first on the scene following the capsizing of the Leviathan II and began pulling survivors from the frigid waters.

Johns praised the local heroes of his home town of Tofino, including members of local First Nations, marine tour operators, and local residents whose swift actions prevented further loss of life. He noted the accident in Tofino highlighted the need to

provide training and equipment to volunteers, especially in remote coastal communities where response times are longer for emergency services.

"We need to equip our local communities with the proper resources to aid in search and rescue and prevent the loss of life, on top of reopening local Canadian Coast Guard facilities like the Tofino Marine Traffic and Communications Centre in Ucluelet," Johns said. "My motion will support the Coast Guard while honouring those who we have lost as well as the heroes who helped save 21 lives, one year ago."

This motion comes a day after members of the Ahousaht First Nation were honoured with Red Cross Canada's Rescuer Award for their efforts surrounding the Leviathan II on October 25, 2015.

Full text of the motion:

"That in the opinion of this House, given the events surrounding the sinking of the Leviathan II on October 25, 2015, and the important role local traditional knowledge played in the rescue of survivors, the government should allocate resources

"He had grown up in a country run by politicians who sent the pilots to man the bombers to kill the babies to make the world safer for children to grow up in."

Ursula K Le Guin American writer 1929-

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 execu-

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

WOMEN IN BLACK invite you to join them in their monthly vigil to remember 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.

CAROLE JAMES, MLA FOR VICTORIA-Beacon Hill, invites you to her Holiday Open House, on Monday, December 5, from 4-6 pm, at her Community Office, 1004 Fort Street. Everyone is welcome and there will be light refreshments. Non-perishable food and personal care items will be gratefully

accepted for the Mustard Seed Food Bank.

RANDALL GARRISON, MP for Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke, invites you to join him at his Annual Holiday Open House, on Monday, December 19, from 4-6 p.m., at 2904 Tillicum Road.

MAURINE KARAGIANIS, MLA for Esquimalt-Royal Roads, invites you to her Holiday Open House on Wednesday, December 21, from 4-6 pm, at A5 - 100 Aldersmith Place. Light snacks and refreshments will be served. Please bring a donation of non-perishable food for the Esquimalt Neighbourhood House.

COWICHAN VALLEY NDP NOMINATION Convention will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2017, at Cowichan Secondary School, 2652 James Street, Duncan, from 11 am to 4 pm. Only new members whose applications were received by October 17, 2016, and members in good standing, present at the Nomination Convention, will be entitled to vote for their candidate of choice. Absentee or mail in ballots will not be available. Watch for information about all candidates meetings planned for the early January. For more information call Cowichan Valley president Ian Morrison at 250-710-1227 or email him at morrison.director@shaw.ca 250-710-1227(C)

How employers of Temporary Foreign Workers get away with low pay

By Mark Thompson

Canada's controversial Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program is once again under the microscope with the release of a Parliamentary Committee report in late September. While the report recommends some much-needed improvements to the rights of migrant workers, its main focus is to give employers easier access to TFWs. Instead, we need a re-think of the Program so it considers the interests of low-skilled Canadian workers.

To properly understand today's TFW Program, we should consider its origins. The Program for low-skilled workers was introduced in the early 2000s. The federal government at the time argued it was needed to solve a labour shortage because "Canadians won't do this work." However, the shortages that the TFW Program was supposed to meet were actually the result of government and corporate policies that made a number of jobs with low wages and poor working conditions unacceptable to most Canadian workers.

Three industries that relied heavily on temporary foreign workers illustrate this point: farm labour, fast food and meatpacking.

Beginning in 2004, BC farmers received permission to hire foreign workers under an existing program, the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). By then, farmworkers already were among the lowest-paid people in the province, due in part to decisions the provincial government had made. For example BC government regulations reduced farmworkers' wages by four percent by eliminating holiday and vacation pay. Later, the government eliminated overtime rates for farmworkers.

Agriculture jobs are seasonal (and thus temporary), physically demanding, performed in inclement weather and often dangerous. Cutting farmworkers' wages—which were already often less than the min-

imum wage because of piece rates — only made them less attractive. It's hardly surprising that farmers received few applicants and many workers quit after a few days on the job.

Instead of improving pay or working conditions, these employers received permission to import foreign workers for the jobs. Since 2005, more than 2,000 temporary workers have come to BC to work in agriculture each year. Under the terms of the SAWP agreement with Mexico, these foreign workers received better compensation than Canadians doing the same work.

Another industry that went to the government complaining they weren't able to hire Canadians was fast food. In 2014-2015, fast food hired more temporary foreign workers than any other sector in Western Canada. To be sure, the oil sands boom affected labour markets in all of the Western provinces. In rural areas, some fast food restaurants raised wages considerably in an attempt to recruit workers who were lured by the prospect of oil sands wages. Still the industry imported thousands of foreign workers, many from the Philippines.

Privately, employers admitted to being dissatisfied with Canadian workers who would take the jobs for the prevailing wages in the industry. Even though they are often considered "unskilled", fast food jobs are more demanding and require more skill than most people realize. Counter attendants are on their feet for most of their shifts. They have to deal with large volumes of customers and provide very rapid service. Employers found that Canadians who got the jobs, many of whom were teenagers and young adults, lacked the skills or commitment to do them well and did not stick around long. In some cases, turnover exceeded 100 percent per year.

Fast food employers turned to foreign workers to fill these jobs. They recruited Fil-

ipinos with fast food experience, in some cases managerial experience, or post secondary education. Even the low wages paid in Canada were attractive to workers coming from poor countries, and many hoped that restaurant jobs would lead to permanent residency.

In effect, instead of solving a real labour shortage, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program simply allowed employers to recruit foreign workers with superior qualifications to Canadians for the same compensation, at or near the minimum wage.

The story of how the meatpacking industry came to rely on temporary foreign workers is another interesting one. For decades, a few large companies dominated the industry. Most plants were unionized and wages were relatively high. But economic forces and technological change upset these arrangements in the 1970s and 1980s. Employers demanded wage cuts as high as 40 percent, and several bitter strikes followed. Large plants closed, and production shifted to smaller plants in rural areas, initially without a union.

However, these plants found it difficult to recruit local workers. Why? The work was dangerous and unpleasant. Jobs in the new plants were repetitive, dangerous and required little skill. Wages were low. Employers attempted to hire workers from other regions of Canada, which suffered from high unemployment. Even before the boom in the oil industry, they had little success. Eventually, meatpacking companies obtained permission to hire temporary foreign workers. Wages in many operations remain low. In BC, poultry processors hiring foreign workers offer a starting rate for new employees of ranging from \$11-\$12 per hour in non-unionized plants to \$13.46 per hour in unionized plants.

The common pattern in these three industries is clear: low pay and poor working

conditions explain why employers had trouble recruiting Canadians to fill their jobs. Government policies in the early 2000s kept minimum wages low, stripped workers of key protections and did little to enforce minimum employment standards and other workplace protections. These policies created jobs that were unattractive to most Canadians. Instead of making the jobs better, employers' preferred solution was to lobby for increased access to the TFWP, thereby ensuring wages remained low and working conditions unchanged.

Any new TFW program Canada undertakes should protect the interests of workers, and not just of employers. For example, wages for any job eligible for the TFW Program should be at least 25 percent above the minimum wage. Existing regulations that reduce wages and working conditions for any group of workers should be eliminated as a condition for hiring TFW's, such as the exclusion of farm workers from overtime and vacation pay. The TFW Program should also be limited to meeting real, temporary labour shortages; no employer should be allowed to hire "temporary" foreign workers for more than a year.

New regulations for the TFW Program should require employers to demonstrate that they have responded to market pressures by improving wages and working conditions for Canadians before they can seek to employ temporary foreign workers. Otherwise the TFW Program creates a class of foreign workers who occupy less desirable jobs, and contributes to wage inequality in Canada.

This piece was originally published in the *Vancouver Sun*. See more at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/how-employers-temporary-foreign-workers-get-away-low-pay-and-bad-working#sthash.ZXBtx-mje.dpuf>

Five reasons why letting people pay for private surgeries won't shorten waits in the public system

By Seth Klein

After years of delay, Dr. Brian Day's case against the BC Government is now being heard in BC Supreme Court.

Day and his private for-profit Cambie Surgery Centre are challenging the parts of the *BC Medicare Protection Act* that prevent doctors and private clinics from directly billing patients for medically necessary procedures.

At the heart of the case is the contention by Day that if people were able to spend their money on private surgery or private insurance, those people would receive faster care while wait times in the public system would also shrink.

But if Day wins, those public wait times are actually much more likely to increase. Here's why:

1. If more doctors and nurses are recruited into the private for-profit system,

fewer of them will be available in the public system.

2. A private system needs long public wait times to attract patients and make money. Think about it: why would anyone pay out-of-pocket if the same care was freely and readily available in the public system?

Indeed, research evidence contradicts Day's claim. Australia (one of Day's favourite examples) had a public system much like Canada's until it decided to introduce a private second tier in the 1990s. The result? The private sector reduced the capacity of the public sector to provide for patients, and wait times grew.

3. When doctors are allowed to practice in both the public and for-profit systems, it creates a harmful incentive for them to prolong their wait-lists in the public system in order to encourage their patients to switch over to the private option.

4. Allowing multiple clinics and doctors to maintain their own competitive wait-lists gets in the way of efficient and fair management of surgical wait-lists.

5. But the most important reason that allowing private-pay health care won't shorten public wait-times is this: those with money will no longer have a stake in demanding improvements to the public system.

To see this dynamic at play, simply look at our education system. There, people are "free" to either stay in the public system or pay out-of-pocket for private school. Many of those with more money and influence have chosen the latter, and as a result the public system has also lost their advocacy voices, leading to under-funding, larger classes, and eroded supports for children with special needs.

That is not the path we want to follow for health care.

Let's be clear. The wait times for some surgeries in our public health care system remain too long. But the cure Dr. Day proposes is worse than the disease. There is a better way. A recent CCPA report, *Reducing Surgical Wait Times*, provides a framework for public innovations that can accomplish this.

But to see these public solutions realized, all of us—rich and poor alike—will have to advocate for them together.

Seth Klein is the BC Director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives



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 3X1, or contact president Ian Morrison, at 250-710-1227.

Esquimalt-Metchosin New Democrats: Write Apt 604, 105-1497 Admirals Road, Victoria, BC V9A 2P8 or email esquimaltmetchosin@gmail.com.

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

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

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

Saanich South New Democrats: Write PO Box 30041, Saanich Centre Postal Outlet, Victoria, BC, V8X 5E1, phone 250-479-1100, or email 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 president Teale Phelps Bondaroff, by phone at 778-678-8325, or by email at tealepb@gmail.com.. See also Facebook: @Saanichgulflslands or Twitter: @SGI_NDP.

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 Tyee Road, Victoria, BC V9A 0A9. Info@victoriacouncilofcanadians.ca and www.victoriacouncilofcanadians.ca.

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

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

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

Human Rights Internet: www.hri.ca.

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

Mining Justice Action Committee (MJAC): contact Heather Tufts at ht tufts@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 Dzbik, 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 maynot cover.

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

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

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

www.ndpsocialists.ca/Issues.html

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

http://pacificfreepress.com

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

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

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

http://socialcoast.org

http://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.