



# Orders of the Day

*The Publication of the Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia*

Volume 22, Number 10

December 2016

## Peace, love, health and happiness to all



The lighting of the BC Legislature Christmas Tree and the festive illumination of the Parliament Buildings have become glowing heralds of the holiday celebrations to come. The Legislature Speaker, the Hon. Linda Reid, invites everyone to join in the lighting celebrations December 8 at 6 p.m. This year's event will feature performances by the Joy of Life Choir, the SingYourJoy Young Adult Chorus and the Reynolds Secondary School band. In this edition of OOTD turn to Pages 14 and 15 for season's greetings from a number of your colleagues.

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Her Honour

The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

*Orders of the Day* is published regularly throughout the year, and is circulated to Association members, all MLAs now serving in Legislature, other interested individuals and organizations.

Material for the newsletter is always welcome and should be sent in written form to:

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The Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia is strictly non-partisan, regardless of members' past or present political affiliation. Founded in 1987, the Association was formally established by an Act of the British Columbia Legislature on February 10, 1998.

*Orders of the Day* was conceived, named and produced in its early stages by Bob McClelland, former MLA and cabinet minister, following his retirement from office. Hugh Curtis ably helmed this publication up through May 2014.

# Thank You and Miscellany

**Thank you to Pacific Western Brewing** for continuing their advertising in *Orders of the Day* for another year.

We appreciate all of our advertisers for their support of this publication over the years.

### Dues, Subscriptions and Donations

**Ida Chong, Victoria**

# From the Editor's Desk

Just as Rob and I were tucking this December issue of OOTD to bed I received an 11th hour season's greeting from Andrew Petter, President of Simon Fraser University and, of course, the former MLA for Saanich South from 1991 to 2001.

Andrew had a message for all his former colleagues: "At this time of year, more than ever, we need to encourage young people to appreciate and to participate in the political process."

He reminded OOTD readers that they have provided, and still provide, "shining examples of how ordinary citizens can through democratic engagement make a positive difference to our great province."

One of the ways you continue to encourage young people to become engaged in the governance of their province is through the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund that provides BC's Youth Parliament participants with much needed financial support. This year's 88th Youth Parliament runs Dec. 27 through 31 at the Legislature. Look for a full report in the Winter issue that will be published early in the new year, covering January and February.

Sara Neely, at the Victoria Foundation where the fund is managed, tells me the current balance is in excess of \$14,000. For details on how to contribute to Hugh's legacy fund turn to Page 12.

Also, right on deadline we received the sad news of the passing of John Nuraney. The former MLA is being remembered for a life of compassion. He represented Burnaby-Willingdon from 2001 to 2009 and died Nov. 21 at age 79.



"When I think of John Nuraney, one word comes to mind: gentleman," Premier Christy Clark said. The premier's statement remembers Nuraney as a respected leader in the Ismaili community, an entrepreneur and a philanthropist. We will publish a full tribute to John in the Winter issue of OOTD.

Finally, Rob and I wish all OOTD readers a jolly good holiday season. We also want to congratulate AFMLABC's new president Penny Priddy and her executive. And, we thank past-president Gillian Trumper for her steadfast leadership and friendship.



# The Association Executive 2016-17



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*Elected at our Annual General Meeting, November 17, 2016*

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# Greetings from the new AFMLABC President

We have just had a successful AGM and I am looking forward to working with the new Association of Former MLAs of BC Board of Directors over the coming year. The organization would not be in such a good position to begin the year if it were not for the dedicated work of our Past President Gillian Trumper.

2016/2017 brings opportunities to celebrate and reflect on our country, our province and our organization. It is the 150th birthday of Canada, the 100th anniversary of women winning the right to vote in British Columbia and the 30th anniversary of the AFMLABC. I encourage people to submit articles or letters to Orders of the Day to help celebrate these important milestones in our democracy.

On behalf of the Board I wish all of you a joyous Christmas filled with love, caring, friends and family.

Perhaps I could ask you to remember the Food Bank or Christmas Bureau in your communities so that we can work to ensure that everyone and especially children will have joy in their Christmas time.

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Penny Priddy

President, AFMLABC



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# Association AGM held in Vancouver Nov. 17

Penny Priddy, who has been serving the Association of Former MLAs of BC as Vice-President was elected President at the association's Annual General Meeting Thursday, November 17.

Penny is looking forward to continuing the fine leadership of Gillian Trumper, who has carried the association ably through the major transition needed to continue the tremendous work of the late Hugh Curtis. Most of the executive have returned except for Gerard Janssen, who has been replaced by Patrick Wong.

Thanks to the generosity of Telus, and their very supportive staff, we were able to hold our AGM in the beautifully designed Boardroom of Telus Garden in downtown Vancouver.

Several of our Executive were able to participate via teleconferencing from other parts of BC, and one called in from California. The system worked perfectly. We had hoped more of our members would attend with the venue change to downtown Vancouver.

Our finances are in good shape according to Treasurer Jim Gorst and Financial Advisor Ida Chong, but there may be a need for a small increase in members' dues and subscriptions in the coming year. The

membership chair says pay your memberships early and save.

Several directors have volunteered to keep in touch with members in their area of the province to improve communications. Because of the cancelling of the Annual Dinner, we are in the process of either returning cheques, or sending out refunds for deposits received.

This publication, OOTD, has had a successful year under the editorship of Brian Kieran, Rob Lee, and the very able Editorial Board support of Anne Edwards, Joan Barton and Irwin Henderson. Another 10 issues of the newsletter will be coming your way in 2017.

Planning has already started for the 2017 Annual Dinner at Government House. It was noted at the AGM that next year will be the 30th anniversary of the association, the 150th birthday for Canada, and 100 years since women gained the right to vote in BC. Lots to celebrate!

Ken Jones  
Secretary & Membership, AFMLABC



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# Government House is poised for the holidays

The holiday season at Government House begins this year on Friday, December 16 when Christmas carolling will begin at 5 p.m. in the Ballroom, led by Louise Rose.

Light refreshments will be served. Following the carolling, members of the public are welcome to stroll through the main floor and view the Christmas decorations. Food contributions or donations to support local food banks are encouraged and accepted at the door.

This year, as always, New Year's Day, Sunday, is the day of Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon's annual Levée from 10 a.m.

Their Honours will greet the public and visitors will have an opportunity to enjoy light refreshments and music from the Naden Band of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Her Honour will deliver her remarks at 11:30 a.m. and guests are encouraged to arrive early to avoid a long line-up. Food contributions or donations to support local food banks are encouraged and accepted at the door upon entrance to the Levée.

Records suggest that only after British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871 were Levées regularly held by the lieutenant governor of the province. The (Victoria) Colonist of January 3rd, 1872 reported that "His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Joseph J.W. Trutch and family received and entertained many callers at their private residence." Subsequent Levées were held, for the most part, at Government House.



*Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon and children carolling.*

From the rather boisterous celebrations of early times to the somewhat more sedate, if informal, event of today, the Levée has evolved into an occasion to call upon representatives of the sovereign, military, and municipal governments, to exchange New Year's greetings and best wishes for the coming year, and to renew old acquaintances and meet new friends in a convivial atmosphere. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the events of the past year and to welcome in the challenges and opportunities of the New Year.



*As in previous years, Lieutenant Governor Guichon will host the New Year's Day Levée at Government House.*



# Member News

Please send news about your activities to [ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com](mailto:ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com) for the next newsletter.

## Where Are They Now?

### Dawn Black humbled to join the “Rosemary Brown” circle

Former MP and MLA Dawn Black, currently a director of the Broadbent Institute, is this year’s recipient of the Rosemary Brown Award for Women.

Black, who served as New Westminster’s MLA and MP, received the award at the third annual Rosemary Brown Memorial Conference at Simon Fraser University in September. The award recognizes a BC woman or BC-based organization that promotes the value and ideas Brown championed during her life.

Brown, who served as an MLA in the B.C. legislature from 1972 to 1986, was known for her work with causes related to equality and rights for women, the disadvantaged and minorities.

Black said: “I can remember Rosemary, I remember listening to her speak and being so awed by her ability to speak, her passion, her courage. She was one of the first women in Canada, if not the first woman in Canada, to run for the leadership of a federal party. She was the first black woman elected to a provincial legislature or that level of government in Canada. She was a powerhouse.”

During her time in Ottawa, Black was successful in establishing Dec. 6 as a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada in recognition of the 14 female engineering students killed at École Polytechnique in 1989. She also initiated anti-stalking legislation that was passed by the federal government.

“I am really honoured to get such an award named after Rosemary Brown,” Black told the New Westminster Record recently. “I never worked with her – she was ahead of my time – but I certainly knew her and admired her greatly. She was quite a remarkable woman, so it’s humbling to receive an award in her name.”

Since Black retired three years ago she has been quite busy.

“I’m on the Board of the Broadbent Institute, a national organization promoting social democratic ideals and possibilities. It’s a non-partisan organization that does research into public policy i.e. the Green Economy, Income Inequality, Democratic Renewal. We’re able to do the kind of in-depth work that political parties are unable



Among those who gathered at Simon Fraser University for the annual Rosemary Brown Memorial conference: From left, Patsy George, a women’s rights activist, Kimberly Azyan of the B.C. Association of Social Workers, award recipient Dawn Black and Cieta Brown. (Photo: David Black).

to do and publicly share ideas across the partisan divide,” she says. “I’ve been on the board since the inception five years ago and we’ve had tremendous growth and success.

“I’m also on the board of a small organization called Corinne’s Quest. We are working to have Section 43 of Canada’s Criminal Code repealed. This is the only permissive section of the Criminal Code and it prescribes how children can be physically punished. “Fifty countries worldwide have eliminated this provision and Canada has signed the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child which calls for repeal.

“Extensive research over many years is conclusive, hitting children can lead to impaired parent-child relationships, poorer child mental health, child aggression and weaker internalization of moral standards.”

Black has also travelled to a number of developing countries to participate in democracy building workshops and mentoring women candidates. She was in Myanmar a couple of months ago.

A grandparent to seven “sensational” grandchildren, Black says: “Like a lot of retired people say, I seem to be very, very busy.”



# A no frills, no debt Midlands Christmas

By Jim Hume

There were a few white Christmases when I was growing up in England's industrial Midlands, but not many. For the most part Christmas weather was chimney-smoke dreary, wet, and cold.



But that was just the weather, not the spirit of the times.

By today's standards we didn't have much to be happy about, but happy we were. Even with a father out of work in the great depression of the 1920s, and a mother trying to raise four children while taking in other people's laundry, or scrubbing other people's kitchen floors, to keep bread – and on some joyous days, butter – on the table.

They were hard times for my parents, but, I don't remember them being hard for us children. We were sometimes hungry, but never desperately so. There always seemed to be a slice of bread and "dripping" or, in rare moments of luxury, butter and jam.

I have been trying to figure out what made Christmas on the edge of poverty so happy for our small family of six, before death and time scattered us to dust or far away places. I have no desire to return to the sometimes lean days of childhood, but I wouldn't mind seeing restored some still well remembered things.

Like the Salvation Army band playing Christmas carols on grimy, rain-wet, streets with crowds huddled under gas-lit street lamps – to listen and sometimes join in. Only readers old enough to remember childhood before new-fangled electric radios piped Christmas music into every home will understand. Those were the days when the first carols were heard only few days before Christmas; when a boy soprano could launch O Holy Night echoing through the shadows of an old church's vaulted ceiling like an angel singing; when most of us could sing along with the great choruses of Handel's Messiah. And some of us still can.

Radio, and later television, relieved us of the thirst for street corner brass band Christmas music, or the walk to church on Christmas Eve for a spiritual feast of carols.



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Sure, we can still find carol services in local churches and cathedrals but they have, alas, had their beauty – and their inspiration – diluted by the tidal wave of Christmas musak pumped out by radio, television and the ubiquitous piped music of the mall. Christmas carols swamp us from early-November, and long before Christmas week we become overwhelmed, senses deadened, to any message the old hymns composed to lift the human spirit. They have become homogenized background sounds, unheard and unheeded, by stressed shoppers trying to buy the Christmas spirit.

It would, I think, be wonderful to see a voluntary ban on Christmas music until at the earliest December 15. Merchants can keep their marketing strategies, push for ever-higher Christmas sales – but with the good grace to leave what remains of the spiritual side of Christmas to the churches – and down-town week-before-Christmas Salvation Army Band street concerts, if such bands still exist.

One other thing merchants could contribute to recapture lost Christmas values would be restoration of the old “lay away” plan – the pay before you take delivery scheme which saw even the poorest of families able to buy Christmas gifts and wake up on Boxing Day debt free.

When I was the youngest lad in the family I had to accompany my mother and sister to the street market every Saturday morning, dreading at every step that I would meet a derisive schoolmate. The most important stop was at “The Co-operative”, a department store where Co-op members were encouraged to start in January to “lay away” for next Christmas. Every Saturday mother would buy a stamp for her most carefully protected possession “the Co-op stamp book.” The money for her stamps came from the floors she scrubbed, the sheets she washed, ironed and folded immaculately.

Come Christmas week she would have enough stamp money laid away to provide every member of her family with a present – including a new clay pipe and a stick of evil smelling black tobacco for my dad. My first bike – a Raleigh three speed – when I was 14, must have cost her acres of scrubbed floors and a multitude of crisp white sheets. But when I got it in 1937 with a “Merry Christmas/Happy Birthday” message, it was already paid in full.

It was important to her and to the merchants who served her that there should always be enough money to pay the Christmas bills – before Christmas. Debt, both banks and merchants taught us back then, was bad.

I have given up on banks with their greedy credit card inducements to ever higher “charge it” burdens, but I think merchants, with genuine Christmas good will, could lead us back to “lay away” debt free days. It would be a great Christmas gift to offer their customers. And if they gift-wrapped it with a promise of “no pablum caroling before December 15”, well, I would wish them all a Merry Christmas!

**(You can follow Jim Hume's wordsmithing adventures at [www.jimhume.ca](http://www.jimhume.ca).)**







*The First Peoples Gallery is one of the crown jewels of the Royal BC Museum. It showcases a remarkable collection of materials from the diverse and vibrant cultures of First Nations in BC. Canoes are an important element of culture, intertribal relationship, resource gathering and trade. This one was used in the 19th century by a Coast Salish (Songhees) chief to travel in the Victoria area.*

## The Royal BC Museum celebrates 130 years

In 1886, a citizens' petition sparked the creation of the Royal BC Museum, and the interests of BC citizens continued to guide the museum and archives as it celebrated its 130th anniversary in October.

"Our legacy is marked by a remarkable continuity of vision, values and goals," said Royal BC Museum CEO Prof. Jack Lohman. "Our forward strategy is about being Canada's number one museum, promoting a culture of collaboration and advancing inclusion and diversity in all our work."

To celebrate the anniversary, for the first time ever, the Royal BC Museum revealed some seldom-seen treasures - five original Emily Carr paintings briefly on public display. The five paintings by the world-renowned BC artist and author are Yan, Q.C.I., Tanoo, Q.C.I., Sombreness Sunlit, Kitamaux - Hazelton, and Roots.

Approaching the milestone anniversary has encouraged the museum and archives to take stock of the past but also to look to the future, thinking of innovative and inclusive ways to reach more people. The Royal BC Museum will continue extending its reach across the province and throughout diverse communities, sending travelling exhibitions throughout BC and consulting with ethnic communities about under-represented stories.

The Royal BC Museum Corporation is one of Canada's greatest cultural treasures. While the museum was founded in 1886, the Archives followed in 1894. In 2003, these two organizations joined to become British Columbia's combined provincial museum and archives, collecting artifacts, documents and specimens of British Columbia's natural and human history, safeguarding them for the future and sharing them with the world.

Through research and learning, the museum strives to broaden understanding about our province and inspire curiosity and wonder. It is passionate about sharing British Columbia's story with the millions of visitors who walk through its doors and explore the website each year.

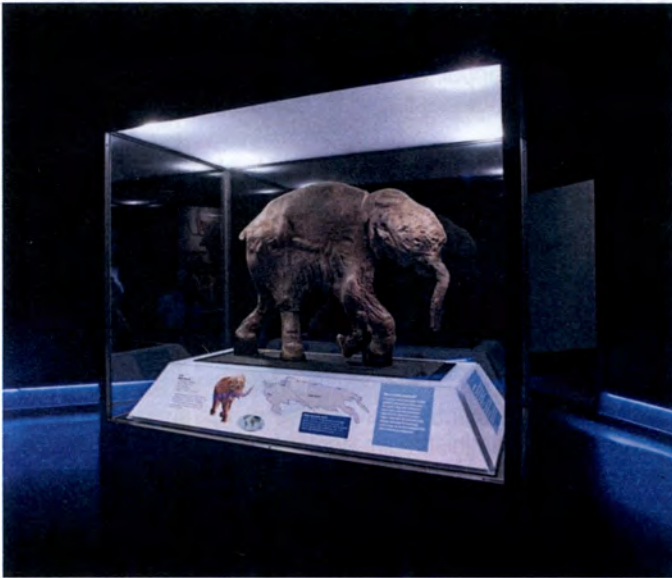
By exploring BC's social and environmental history, the Royal BC Museum advances new knowledge and understanding of British Columbia, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection.

Looking to the future, the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.



*The Royal BC Museum has more than seven million artifacts and specimens in its collection. This Phantom V Rolls-Royce, once owned by John Lennon, is one of our most famous and charismatic artifacts.*





The 43,000 year old mummified mammoth called "Lyuba", the emotional centrepiece of our 2016 feature exhibition, *Mammoths: Giants of the Ice Age*. Every year the Royal BC Museum has at least two feature exhibitions. In 2017 these will be *Terry Fox: Running to the Heart of Canada*, from April 12 – October 1, and *Family: Bonds & Belonging*, from June 2 – October 31.



A killer whale rising from a sea of gold, on a repoussé box with a beaver motif is how Haida artist Bill Reid described the work he would create. It was commissioned by the provincial museum for an exhibit to mark British Columbia's 100th birthday. Repoussé involves hammering out a raised pattern from the back of a thin sheet of metal, such as this 22 carat gold. This splendid work of art was a sparkling centrepiece of our 2015 feature exhibition *Gold Rush: El Dorado in BC*, which is now at the Canadian Museum of History.

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## Former NDP provincial secretary Clive Lytle exhausted his “invincibility”

A gentleman known to many association members, Clive Lytle, provincial organizer and subsequently provincial secretary of the New Democratic Party, has died at age 79.



Clive's wife Linda Lytle wrote these words: "Our Clive left us in the early hours of October 27 when invincibility ended. He was a man of extraordinary spirit, courage, character and charisma, but in the end, his body abandoned his spirit."

Writing in 'Horse Canada' Clive's friend Glen Todd said Clive was admitted to hospital in late October. "Some of you will know that he suffered two serious falls in mid-September and was hospitalized for about a week. Although he was discharged home, he never really recovered fully from the injuries.

"He was consistently grateful to all levels of the hospital staff for their tender, caring assistance during his stays. The staff also fully supported me during the final moments, for which I, too, am grateful."

Born on August 10, 1937, Clive grew up in Winnipeg and, for a brief time, in California. Returning to BC, he lived in Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster and Vancouver, enjoying his last years at Fountain Terrace adjacent to Granville Island. Grand Beach in Manitoba, Zihuatanejo in Mexico, and Hastings Racecourse in Vancouver played important roles in his memories and the stories of his life.

After completing his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of British Columbia, he worked with the Vancouver International Festival, served first as Research Director and later as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer for the BC Federation of Labour.

He received a Nuffield Foundation grant for study in Great

Britain and was appointed as provincial organizer and subsequently provincial secretary of the New Democratic Party.

Clive stood for election in 1968 as Member of Parliament in New Westminster ("An odds-on favourite upended by Trudeaumania," says Linda.), and was a key staff member of the BC & Yukon Territory Building Construction Trades Council, Simon Fraser University's Labour Studies Program, and the BC Labour Relations Board.

He was most proud of his public speaking classes at the CLC Winter Schools where adult students learned to lose their fear of extemporaneous public speaking. Advancing social justice and the feminist movement were his pillars. In his later years, Clive thrived in his role as a thoroughbred horse owner and breeder, with over 40 visits to the winners' circle.

Linda says he gathered friends wherever he went, sparking conversations, storytelling, meals, and, of course, glasses of wine. New friends turned into long-time friends, and he cherished everyone in this large circle of people. "He loved creating celebrations, Christmastime, the annual family gatherings, country music (especially Waylon & Willie), hockey and baseball, the New York Times Sunday crossword, the Wizard of Oz (and most other musicals), his cats and horses, mystery novels, Scrabble and travel to sunny destinations."

Clive would have been honoured with memorial donations, if desired, to New Stride Thoroughbred Adoption Society ([www.newstride.com](http://www.newstride.com)) or Turtle Valley Donkey Refuge Society ([turtlevalleydonkeyrefuge.com](http://turtlevalleydonkeyrefuge.com)), signifying his commitment to animal welfare.

In accordance with Clive's wishes, a remembrance gathering will be held in the spring at Hastings Racecourse. Friends will be notified when the date is confirmed ([RemembranceGatheringForClive@gmail.com](mailto:RemembranceGatheringForClive@gmail.com)).

### An invitation to donate to the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund

The Victoria Foundation looks forward to receiving donations to the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund from all of Hugh's well wishers and friends.

**By phone:** Call 250-381-5532 to make a donation by credit card directly via the Victoria Foundation.

**By cheque:** Send cheques to the Victoria Foundation at #109 645 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1G2. Please ensure they are made out to The Victoria Foundation. Note the name of the fund in the memo line or in a cover letter.

**Online:** The Victoria Foundation's mechanism for online donations is [CanadaHelps](http://CanadaHelps) and the steps are:

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- Click to indicate whether you want to donate now or monthly and you will be taken through the steps to make your donation.
- In the section for designation of your gift, click on the drop down menu to select the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund.
- You may pay with VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Interac or through a PayPal account.
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If you have any questions about how to make a donation to the Victoria Foundation, please contact Sara Neely, Director of Philanthropic Services, at 250-381-5532 or [sneely@victoriafoundation.bc.ca](mailto:sneely@victoriafoundation.bc.ca)

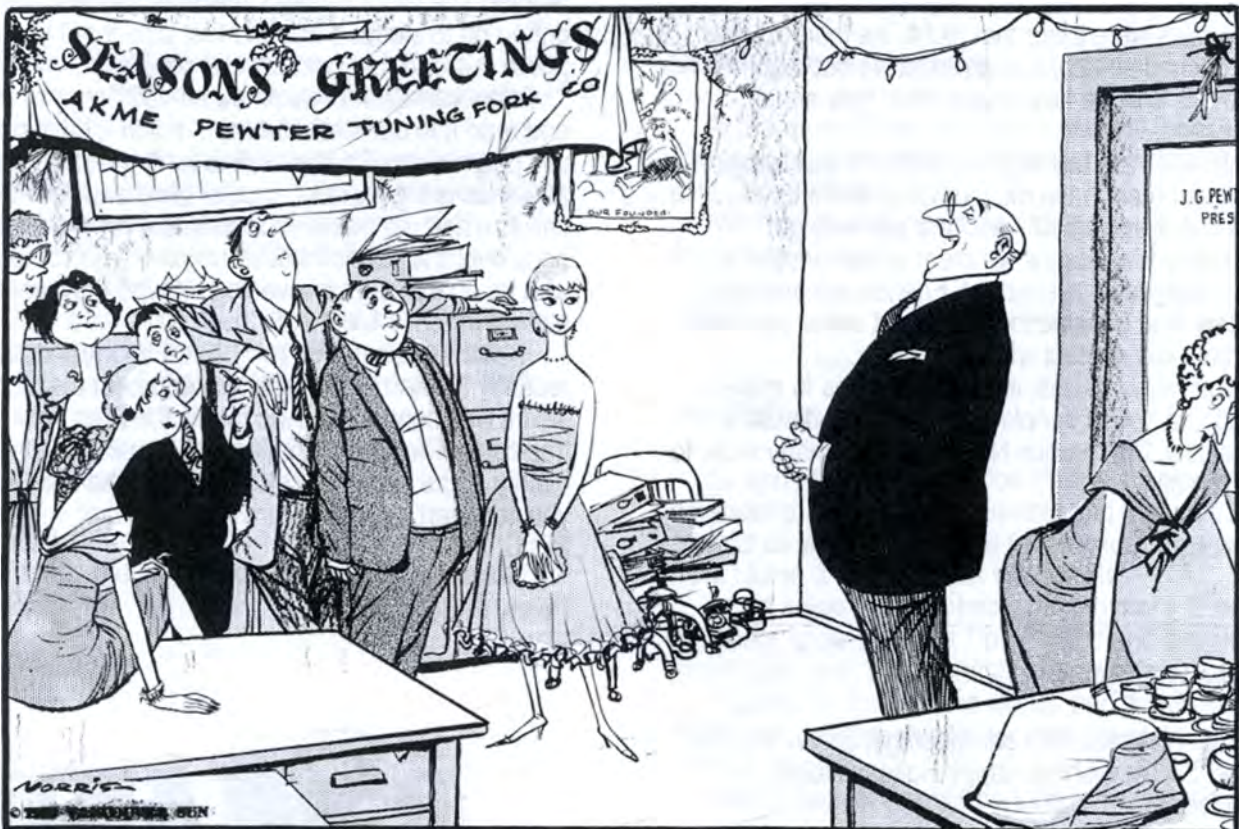


# Len Norris



December 11, 1965

"I'm prepared to accept it when it comes ... it's just the nerve-wracking count-down."



December 20, 1957

"... and management is pleased to announce a new employee welfare plan - no cocktails at the office cocktail party."



# Letters

## Santa's smooth ride

Merry Christmas from "Santa" AKA Gerard Janssen on his way to the 32nd Annual Port Alberni Toy Run.

We have raised more than \$1 million over the years for the children and families of the Alberni Valley and the West Coast.

Gerard Janssen



## A neighbourly New Year's

Some 60 plus years ago we bought the last lot on a street and built our home. About the only thing that our neighbours had in common were kids. Everyone was friendly but we all had our "real friends" elsewhere.

Fast forward about 20 years. There was a very heavy snowfall on the day of New Year's Eve. Roads were impassable. In the early evening, a knock at the door and a neighbour said: "Nobody is going anywhere tonight. Come over to our house around 9 o'clock, bring something to share and we will celebrate New Year together."

Five couples were there that night. As the next new year approached someone suggested we get together again. We did, and we have every New Year since, rotating hosting.

My wife and I are the only "neighbours" still living on the block, the others have moved two or three times. Also, we no longer wait 'till New Year's Eve to get together. Every few months we meet at one another's house or a suggested restaurant. Friends are precious. Make a New Year's resolution to contact some old friend that you have lost contact with.

To all you former MLAs, it takes two sides to make a House and in a house people should be friends. So a Happy, Healthy, Prosperous New Year, and many more to come, to you all.

Doug Symons

## Missing the Legislature

Retirement is great but I am missing Victoria and the Legislature. So I'm wishing Happy Holidays to all ... cheque to follow.

Diane Thorne

## Ah ... Odors of the Day

Hopefully some subscribers will send in a list of their favourite 'scents' around Christmas time, the salivating aroma of turkey cooking in the oven, chestnuts roasting on an open fire, rum soaking in the plum pudding, open box of Rogers chocolates. These could all come under the heading "Odors of the Day" ?

'Hear, Hear' and may the joys of Christmas fill the hearts of one and all!

Graeme Roberts

## The Night Before Christmas

On Christmas Eve of 1965 I was working the 4-12 shift as a paediatric nurse on a ward at Toronto's Hospital For Sick Children or "Sick Kids" as it was known. Many of the children lived too far away to be able to go home for Christmas. They wondered if Santa would find them and asked if the hospital had a chimney for him to come down. Logical questions when you are four years old. At bedtime we hung stockings on the end of every crib knowing that they would later be filled by strange looking Elves wearing starched white uniforms.

I remember sitting in a room filled with eight cribs and reading The Night Before Christmas as these little people drifted off to sleep. It was the first time that I had read this poem out loud, but certainly not the last.

A few years later I acquired an 1891 copy of the book and read it to our first born child, a son. I have now read this poem every Christmas Eve for the last 47 years. The audience is bigger now, another child and her three children and the tradition continues. I have even read the book over the phone to adult children who could not be with us on that special evening. Maybe they were humouring their Mum but I loved it.

In conversation with my 10-year-old granddaughter recently I asked her what she liked about the story. She said it was comforting. And that is the thing about traditions. They bring comfort and continuity, a sense of history and a sense of belonging. And the best thing is, you can start a new one anytime you want, maybe even this Christmas.

Penny Priddy

# SEASONS



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## Good friends have been lost

This Christmas we are back and settled in Salmon Arm.

It has been a sad 2016 when I look back on the passing of Bill Bennett, Bob McClelland and recently Old Leather Lungs Don Phillips. They were all great friends. They are truly missed.

My highlight of 2016 was the annual BC Liberal Party Convention in Vancouver in November, a real experience for an 83-year-old retired politician from a simpler age.

I registered and got my voting card. Simple. But, then they hand me a little device - it looked like an adding machine - that turns out to be a remote electronic voting device. Welcome to the high tech world!

The highlight of the convention for me was getting a hug from the Premier.

I kept looking for a few of my old Socred colleagues, but none could be found.

Cliff Michael

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## Toronto bound for the kids

Christmas is threatening to come again. Well, it feels like a threat now; it all changes when you get surrounded by the carols and the colours and the kids.

Here in the East Kootenay we may even have a white Christmas. Although it has "always" snowed for the first time in October, this year it was November 15. A wind came past that was surely the collective sigh of relief from our skiers.

My lot is to go to Toronto in winter. If it weren't for my three youngest grandchildren (two still in elementary school) being there, I might have protested. I'll be back for BC's lovely January.

I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and the happiest New Year yet!

Anne Edwards  
(In Moyie where the lake is about to freeze for the ice fishing derby.)

## Good to be North of 49

My greeting is: Blessed be those who served and serve in the Leg, for they shall receive OOTD.

My thought is: We are very lucky to live in Canada. I think we have seen "peak America." Their age of claimed exceptionalism is over; only the hubris is left.

On the other hand as my old boss, Art Laing, used to ask: "Who would you rather have living on the other side of the border?"

A very merry 2017.

Gordon Gibson

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## Enjoying life in Toronto

Yvonne and I are enjoying our new life in Toronto with our two sons, Neil and Chris, our daughters-in-law and our four grandchildren. During the winter, we travel to avoid the cold weather.

We send Christmas greetings with wishes of love, good health and good fortune to you and your loved ones. May the New Year be peaceful and prosperous for everyone.

John Reynolds

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## Grateful for what we have

At this time of year we can be grateful for all we have. I feel very fortunate to live in such a wonderful and safe part of the world!

Wishing members and their families all the best for this holiday season.

Jeff Bray

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## Don Phillips remembered

So sorry to hear about Don Philips, he was a stalwart defender of rural British Columbia and a good friend. Thanks as well to Jim Hume for an excellent piece on Don; Hume is still a master wordsmith.

As an aside - and probably not too many of our members know this - but Don Phillips and Jim Hume got along quite well; that friendship showed in Jim's article.

Thanks Jim for the kind words, and thank you Don Philips for being such a larger-than-life player on the BC political stage.

Rest in peace; you will be long remembered.

Bruce Strachan

# GREETINGS



## Victoria theatre ruckus sparked 1861 racism debate

(The City of Victoria declared Nov. 19th "Mifflin Wistar Gibbs Day." He was the first black elected in Canada on Nov. 19, 1866, 150 years ago and served on city council for three years.)

By Dave Obee  
Victoria Times Colonist



Mifflin Wistar Gibbs and Nathan Pointer were probably not looking for trouble when they took their wives to a benefit concert in Victoria's theatre on Wednesday evening, Sept. 25, 1861.

Trouble found them, though, because of their skin colour. They were the first blacks to take seats in the theatre, and that caused problems.

Emil Sutro was one of the first to object. He had been scheduled to play in the orchestra, but refused to take the stage unless the "coloured people" were moved out of prominent seats in the dress circle.

The performance went on without Sutro, but as it neared its end, someone threw a package of flour on Gibbs and Pointer. Gibbs responded by punching a man named William Ryckman. A row started, with several persons knocked down and trampled. The fire bells rang and the police were called to put an end to the disturbance.

"No one can defend the particular act by which several of our coloured citizens were gratuitously insulted," the Colonist said in an editorial. "They bought and paid for their tickets for the concert; took the seats the tickets called for; and consequently the right they thus acquired ought in all cases to be maintained."

The newspaper's position was clear.

"It matters not whether a man carried a black skin or a white one under his shirt," said the editorial, which was probably written by Amor De Cosmos, the newspaper's owner at the time. "If he has lawfully purchased a privilege to attend a concert no one should interfere with his enjoyment."

The editorial provides a window into 19th-century attitudes about race in Victoria. It said many people in the community believed in the "superiority of the Caucasian over the African," and added that the majority of people in the community would not want to attend concerts if it meant they would be in close contact with blacks.

The Colonist ran a letter from someone identified only as "an offended Englishwoman," noting that Sutro, a Jew, was himself part of a much-persecuted race, and as such his sympathies should have been with the blacks. Another letter, from "an Englishman," said that the concert had been a swindle because the organizer had not warned patrons that blacks would be admitted.

On Sept. 30, the matter went to court. Gibbs was fined five pounds and ordered to pay for a new coat for Ryckman.

Sutro, Gibbs and Pointer had all come to Victoria from San Francisco in 1858, when the Fraser gold rush lured thousands of people north. For Sutro, it was a chance to make some money, while for Gibbs and Pointer, Victoria represented a chance to escape some of the racism they endured in California.

Gibbs had helped organize the emigration. He and his business partner, Peter Lester, opened a store that was said to be the first in Victoria not run by the Hudson's Bay Company. He was elected to Victoria city council in 1866, representing the James Bay ward, and helped push for British Columbia's confederation with Canada.

After dissolving his partnership with Lester, Gibbs became involved in coal mining in the Queen Charlotte Islands, and had 50 men working for him.

With the end of the Civil War, many of the American blacks in British Columbia returned to the United States. Gibbs left in 1869, and by 1871 was working as a lawyer in Arkansas. He was a delegate to the Republican national conventions in 1880 and 1884 and held a variety of government and judicial positions over the years.

Gibbs served as the American consul in Madagascar from 1897 to 1901, and then became the president of a bank in Little Rock, Arkansas. In his autobiography, *Shadow and Light*, he wrote fondly of his time in Victoria.