



Orders of the Day

The Publication of the Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia

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June 2016

Remembering our fallen first responders



A memorial wreath celebrates the BC Legislature opening of the BC Emergency Services Garden of Honour to the memory of first responders who have made the ultimate sacrifice. The dedication was chosen to coincide with the National Day of Mourning. Full story Page 3.

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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

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From the Editor's Desk

There are two words you will never find in the same sentence as the name Jess Ketchum ... and they are "runner-up." Well, that was until last month.

We remember Jess as one of the first MAs in government. He was Alex Fraser's winger in Victoria from 1978 to 1983 when he left to become the vice-president of communications at Expo '86. His subsequent career as an advisor to business on strategic communications has been remarkable and his counsel to business leaders on how to interact with government has earned him respect from all quarters.

In fact his track record was unblemished until this spring when someone nominated him to be the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year.

"I was one of two people nominated in West Vancouver because of my involvement in the community," Jess told me. "When I realized that the other nominee, Harry Greenwood, was a celebrated war veteran and when wearing his medals had more metal on his chest than I had in my last two new cars I knew I was done."

Indeed, Harry, the distinguished vet, was the citizen of the hour. I know if Jess had been offered a vote Harry would have got it.

Jess's consolation? Simple. "I was truly honoured just to be nominated as I have always preferred being a participant rather than an observer and that is a trait that has served me well for decades."

OOTD's citizen of the year every year is Rob Lee and he is still standing after his 40th high school reunion.

Rob reports: "I previously attended the 10, 20 and 30 year reunions. As in the past, it seems that the majority of the females have continued to age gracefully (some very gracefully), while the majority of the males have not aged well in the intervening decades.

"To be fair, a few of us guys actually haven't gained a pound nor lost much hair in 40 years – although the hair is much shorter and more gray than in 1976. No more Afros!

"There was the usual talk about marriages and divorces, children and grandchildren, and classmates we have lost over the years. However, in reminiscing about those high school years we could hardly remember anything we learned, but we had clear memories about flirting in class, tutoring and study sessions, wild house parties, poker games – these were the things that we remembered and laughed about."



Dedication of the BC Emergency Services Garden of Honour

On the National Day of Mourning the BC Legislature dedicated the BC Emergency Services Garden of Honour to the memory of first responders who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The Garden of Honour is a place of reflection for families, friends and visitors to take a moment to pay tribute to British Columbia's first responders who have died in service to the province.

The date of the dedication was chosen to coincide with the National Day of Mourning, an occasion that was started in Sudbury, Ontario in 1984 and became an official annual day of remembrance on April 28th, 1985.

The purpose of the National Day of Mourning is to remember and honour those lives lost or injured, to renew the commitment to improving health and safety in the workplace, and to prevent further deaths, injuries and diseases from work. It is in this spirit that the Garden of Honour was dedicated on this day.

The plantings in the garden are designed to reflect the colours in the British Columbia flag. All of the plants and shrubs were donated by various garden nurseries. The transportation of the plants was also donated, and the planting work was carried out under the direction of the Legislative Facilities Planning department.



The Garden of Honour ribbon cutting included (left to right) Solicitor General Mike Morris, Health Minister Terry Lake, Premier Christy Clark, Speaker Linda Reid and Opposition Leader John Horgan.

40th Internship Program reunion draws 150-plus

by Matt Dell

The 40th year reunion of the BC Legislative Internship Program (BCLIP) attracted more than 150 former interns to Victoria for two nights of networking and mentorship and a celebration of the long success of Canada's best parliamentary internship program.

The April 22nd and 23rd event was hosted by the Speaker, the Hon. Linda Reid.

While the majority of attendees came from Victoria and Vancouver, we also had a number of interns travel from Alberta, Washington State, NWT and Ontario for this special occasion.

Among the alumni who attended were former MLAs George Abbott (1976), Gretchen Brewin (1977) and Barry Penner (1989), in addition to the many successful public servants, lawyers, academics, journalists, farmers and business people.

Many of us were hoping to meet notable former intern Russell Brown (1988), who was recently appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada in 2015. However, despite Justice Brown's enthusiasm about the program and the reunion, he was unable to attend due to pressing court decisions.



40th Legislative Internship Program reunion keynote speaker Jessica McDonald, CEO of BC Hydro, and a 1991 intern.

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Our reunion began on Friday night with a reception in the Legislature hosted by Madame Speaker that featured delicious appetizers, historical information and photos of the program and speeches by the current Academic Director, Dr. Patrick Smith (Simon Fraser University), the Director of Ceremony, Matt Dell (myself an intern from 2011).

As the Director of Ceremony, I got to reminisce about some of my favorite memories of the program, including the fascinating experience of working in the caucus while both parties choose new leaders. We all thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and meet new interns, and the enthusiastic conversation was almost deafening as it reverberated off the Legislature's historic walls.

After the reception, we moved to the Victoria Event Centre to dance to fantastic soul and R&B music provided by the Soul Shakers.

One night was clearly not enough time to re-connect with one another, so on Saturday night, we held a formal dinner at Government House hosted by the Honourable Judith Guichon. It was the first time many of us attended a dinner at Government House, and the grand architecture and panoramic ocean views were spectacular.

Saturday's Director of Ceremonies, Chardaye Bueckert (2016), introduced Dr. Patrick Smith who highlighted efforts

to launch a BCLIP Alumni Association. The evening also featured a keynote address by Jessica McDonald, CEO of BC Hydro (1991).

Jessica shared many humorous memories of both her inspirational career path and her eye-opening experience as an intern, where she witnessed the internal politics of the Social Credit caucus during the final year of almost 40 years in government.

Overall, the two-night reunion was a fantastic success. Many of us are already looking forward to the 45th annual reunion when we will have another 50 new interns as part of our alumni. We decided, as a group, to begin the process of setting up an Alumni Association that will give us a platform to stay connected, hold more frequent events, and promote the program.

For those who don't know, the BCLIP began in 1976 as a collaboration among Speaker Gordon Dowding (1975 – NDP, Burnaby), Speaker Dean Smith (1976 – Social Credit, Peace River North) and Academic Director Dr. Walter Young from the University of Victoria.

Since 1976, the BCLIP has accepted 400 university graduates from across BC and Canada who are interested in a hands-on experience in the parliamentary process, public policy and B.C. politics. The six-month program gives interns the opportunity to work in a government ministry, in a party caucus, and at the constituency office of an MLA.



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Messages of appreciation from our Youth Parliamentarians

Nathan How
Premier
87th BC Youth Parliament

The road between childhood and adulthood is one that will forever remain unpaved. No one gets a second run at it. What your parents did will not be what you do, and what your friends do may not be your cup of tea. Thus the youth are left in a lurch of learning on the fly while developing themselves in a world that changes as fast as they do.

In the five years I have spent as a member of the British Columbia Youth Parliament, I have grown from a young teenager filled with wonder and naïveté to an adult citizen who files tax returns in April and drives cars. I also can lead a diverse group of young people.

BCYP provides the roots from which character can grow and the wings on which opportunity can soar. Yes, there are challenges and, yes, we have our internal conflicts. There is even the occasional defeat. But, this strengthens our members, teaching them what no textbook can.

Above and beyond all those lessons, the most valuable thing the organization has given me are the friends - some fleeting, and some life-long.



Ranil Prasad,
Deputy Minister of the Lower Mainland
87th BC Youth Parliament

As someone who comes from a less than ideal socioeconomic background, but with a passion for debate and governance, I'm truly appreciative of the funding given to me via the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund.

Without the funding, I wouldn't have been able to attend the 87th session. Originally, I joined BCYP in order to debate issues of importance to me and my community. I knew that I wanted to pursue a degree related to the social sciences, and felt as though some debate experience would be to my benefit. The five days that I spent at session were the most intellectually stimulating of my life, as I had the chance to engage with students with a variety of viewpoints. I learned a lot about parliamentary procedure, debate tactics, and effective communication.

However, my favourite part of my BCYP experience occurred after session, as I became completely sold on the motto of "Youth Serving Youth." I became immersed in the culture of service, attending service projects and fundraisers all around the Lower Mainland. I have also met many people who have been making change in their communities, and have learned from their excellent examples in order to make myself a better person.

Overall, BCYP has changed me into a more articulate person who is able to imagine the world much more complexly.



**Morgan Weir,
Deputy Minister of Camp Phoenix
87th BC Youth Parliament**

This year I was supported by the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund to pursue my love of Youth Parliament. I just finished my first year of university at the University of Alberta, taking my Bachelor of Science, majoring in Kinesiology. I had an amazing first year and am thrilled to be coming back home in BC.

Part of why I am excited about returning to BC will be to increase my involvement with the British Columbia Youth Parliament. This year, I was appointed the Deputy Minister of Camp Phoenix, a job revolving around bringing our traditional summer camp back. The camp will provide an opportunity for 30 children who haven't been given the opportunity to go to summer camp in the past due to reasons that are beyond their control. This project has taken a lot of work, and due to the generosity and hard work of alumni and BCYP members, our camp is a reality.

Thank you for supporting youth pursuing their passions.



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Well rested, well fed, and happy to be home

by Jim Hume

It was early evening on April 10 when Holland-America's Nieuw Amsterdam slipped her lines in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and at leisurely pace set course across the Caribbean for Cartagena, Colombia.

A few years ago I would have dined well and in comfort, then attached myself to the Internet via on board WiFi and reported to daily newspaper readers on a voyage in progress.

This time I just dined well and in comfort and then watched the moon light its path on the ocean and the stars move with their eternal precision across a cloud free sky – and went to bed. The 25 cents a minute for the use of an extremely slow on-board cyber connection, plus the plodding of far from dexterous two finger typing, have placed the pleasures of instant communication beyond my willingness to pay.

After three nights and two days sailing we gently ease into a berth at Cartagena, a city once plagued by terrorists as brutal as ISIS and put to the torch in 1586 by Francis Drake, one of England's greatest naval heroes. Drake savaged Spanish ships and settlements in the Caribbean and South America thus making his Queen Elizabeth 1 a very rich ruler and Drake a very rich gentleman. The Queen said "thank you" and Francis became "Sir Francis."

The Spanish called him – and still do – "the pirate Drake" which he was at both ends of what is now the Panama Canal and where we are heading as we leave the old city to get in line to transit one of the great wonders of the world.

Drake got to the Pacific side of the Panama Isthmus by weeks of sailing around South America. I made the trip on a luxury liner in a day. It's my second trip, the first a few years ago from west to east, but the wonder remains that mankind could carve its way through jungles and mountains and create a seaway that lifts and lowers seagoing leviathans to varying ocean levels.

But even as I marvel at the miracle of engineering and ease of travel it now brings me, I remember that in the 34 years it took to build, the Canal claimed the lives of 30,609 workers - mostly from malaria, yellow fever and dysentery. By coincidence it was the latter of the deadly trio that took Drake's life in 1596. He was 56 when they buried him at sea "in a sealed lead coffin" off Portobelo, a small town of 5,000 not far from the Panama Isthmus. His coffin, though sought for many years, has never been found.

With the canal behind us we "hang a right" and begin the long, restful, no wrestling with WiFi, run for home. To be honest, and because old habits die hard, I did make



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The Association is pleased to provide space for selected not-for-profit children's organizations at no cost.

Readers:

The next issue of 'Orders of the Day' will be our "Summer Issue" for July and August.

It will be published sometime in late July.

This gives you plenty of time to send us your letters and news about your summer activities.

one serious attempt to communicate at Puerto Caldera, Costa Rica where WiFi is offered free. I attempted to avail myself of Costa Rica hospitality. So did several hundred other passengers armed with everything from ancient laptops (me) to the latest smart phones which remain beyond my understanding.

I took one look around a barn-like room jammed with people - many frustrated as they couldn't get on line with a single button click - and gave up. It's quieter back on the ship with my laptop zipped for the duration.

Silent it remains through Corinto, Nicaragua; Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala; Puerto Chiapas, Huatulco, Puerto Vallarta and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico; San Diego, California and then the close to three days sea-run home to Victoria's Ogden Point.

If you're planning a cruise it's one of the best if you consider flying to Fort Lauderdale and sailing home. Not all ships call at Victoria - but Seattle and Vancouver are not too far from Victoria if it is your home base - and they are certainly easier to handle than a long tedious cross country flight which can quickly take the edge off calm cruising benefits if you sail from west to east then fly home.

If you shop around you'll find a cruise that gently brings you all the way home. One word of advice, if you opt for the "fly east, sail home" option: Avoid any attempt



by your travel agent to book you Air Canada via Toronto to Fort Lauderdale (or other Miami starting points). USA Customs and Immigration, through which you must clear with your luggage in Toronto, is a nightmare of epic proportions even if you have asked for gate to gate assistance as I've been doing since wobbling past 90 two years ago.

Route yourself east with Alaska Air through Seattle. It's far more efficient and easier. Believe me. And it's a great ride home.

(You can follow Jim Hume's wordsmithing adventures at www.jimhume.ca.)



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Summer Tours underway at the Leg



By Esther Rzeplinski
Parliamentary Education Office

Every summer, approximately 145,000 people participate in free guided and self-guided tours of the Parliament Buildings. This summer, the Parliamentary Tour Office is excited to welcome nine Summer Tour Guides and four Parliamentary Players to help educate and entertain visiting school groups, families, and international visitors.

Summer Tour Guides provide interpretive tours that highlight British Columbia's political history, legislative process, and the art and architecture of the Parliament Buildings.

This summer our Tour Guides come from a variety of post-secondary institutions across Canada, including the University of Victoria, McGill University, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Ottawa. We are excited to be able to offer free tours in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Mandarin.

Parliamentary Players bring the history of British Columbia and the Parliament Buildings to life by performing as significant figures from our province's past. Dressed in period costume, the Parliamentary Players appear on tours and deliver lively, historically accurate monologues and vignettes. They also walk the grounds of the Parliament

Buildings and interact with visitors. Our 2016 Parliamentary Players are students from the University of Victoria and the Canadian College of Performing Arts with backgrounds in Theatre and Applied Theatre. They represent Queen Victoria, Francis Mawson Rattenbury, MLA Mary Ellen Smith, and MLA Amor de Cosmos.

From May 21st until September 5th the Parliamentary Tour Office provides indoor and outdoor guided tours seven days a week, including weekends and statutory holidays. On weekends, we recommend that you pick up your tour ticket early in the day as they are given out on a first-come, first-served basis and, on weekdays, please ensure that you arrive at least 10 minutes ahead of your tour start to go through security screening.

Our tours help visitors understand the role of MLAs and the Legislative Assembly of BC as well as the history of the province and the Parliament Buildings.

If former MLAs have visiting guests this summer they should take advantage of this unique opportunity to see history and parliamentary procedure come to life. They can pop into our Parliamentary Gift Shop (also open seven days a week) to take home a memento of their visit to beautiful British Columbia!

2016 Association Dues

It's that time again. Dues for 2016 are due.

Annual membership in the Association is \$60 and that includes the subscription fee for *Orders of the Day* (OOTD).

Fans of OOTD who are not Association members should send in a cheque for \$40 to remain on the newsletter subscription list.

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MLA's no applause bid silenced with loud applause

VICTORIA – Independent MLA Vicki Huntington could only smile as her plea to ban applause in the often raucous BC Legislature was met with deafening applause and prolonged desk thumping.

Huntington said clapping and back slapping take up too much time in the 30 minutes allotted for question periods in the Legislature.

She said such antics also send the wrong message about decorum and civility to the public, especially schoolchildren on field trips as they watch politicians yelling at each other and pounding their desks.

"I'm not saying don't clap during a good speech," Huntington said. "I'm not saying don't clap during a point made during debate. I'm just saying let's get down to the business of asking questions in a civil manner."

She tried to put forward a motion for debate to ban applause during question period but it was rejected by the government and the Opposition New Democrats.

Huntington said applause consumes 20 minutes a week of QP time. "Put that together this session, it's about three-and-a-half hours. That's seven question periods and over 100 questions lost."

Huntington told the legislature last week that the House of Commons in the United Kingdom banned hissing and applause 323 years ago. She said the National Assembly in Quebec banned applause from question period in 2015, and the difference in tone and civility is noticeable.

But her plea fell on deaf ears.

"I think British Columbians, sometimes, wish there was more to clap about," Liberal House Leader Mike de Jong said. NDP house leader Mike Farnworth said clapping and desk pounding are long-standing traditions in the legislature.

(Source: Canadian Press.)

Sri Lankan MPs not fit to be called "Honourable"

(Editor's note: MLA Vicki Huntington is needed in Sri Lanka. The editorial writers at the Ceylon Daily News felt compelled last month to scold MPs about their un-parliamentary "fisticuffs.")

There is no point in blaming our parliamentarians for making the Parliament a shameful spectacle for the umpteenth time in recent memory. Do not forget, we must hold ourselves responsible for the election of 225 MPs into office, knowing deep down that a sizable proportion of them are not fit to be called "Honourable MPs."

Forget the levels of education of our MPs or their ability to contribute to policymaking, the horrendous scenes in Parliament last Tuesday make us seriously question their ability to conduct themselves to maintain at least a modicum of decorum.

While schoolchildren and others in the public gallery were gasping in horror, our MPs grappled with each other, exchanged fisticuffs, yelled at the Speaker and hurled abuse at each other.

It was not the first time such blows have been exchanged inside the Chamber, but it is the first time where bloodshed had been reported in the House. It may also not be the all-time low our Parliament has descended to when compared with the violent attack on Buddhist monks in the House in June 2004. Yet, it clearly sets off alarm bells as to how our Parliament's dignity, decorum and prestige have been so seriously eroded over the past years.

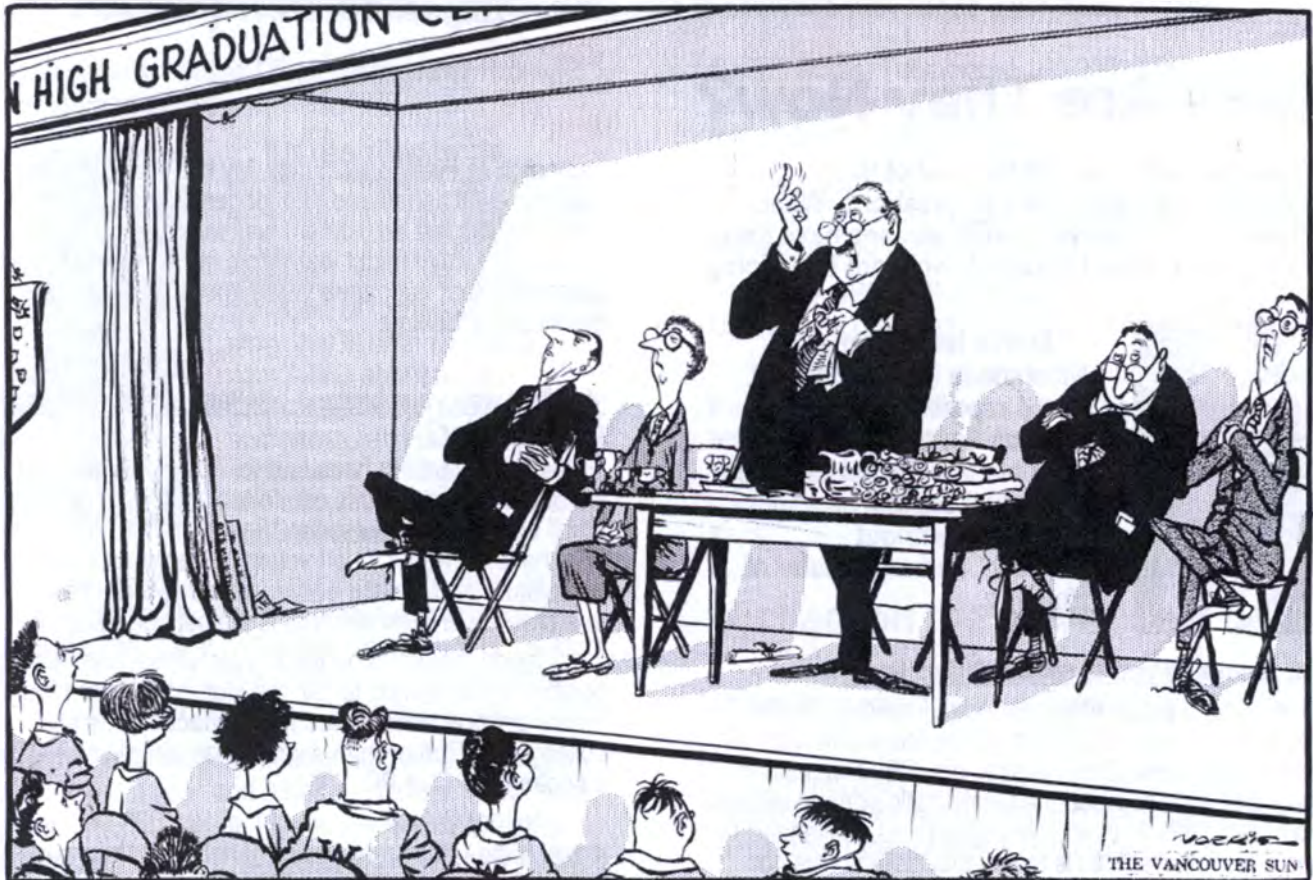


It was also a resounding slap in the face for those who expected a "cultured Parliament" and "consensual traditions in politics." While playing around with the people's mandate, they have let us down, time and again. However, this time, the MPs who were involved in the fistfight had to pay the price as the Speaker decided to suspend them from Parliament for one week. Many were of the opinion that the punishment was too lenient.

The whole episode started with the uproar of dissidents who have fallen back on former President Mahinda Rajapaksa over the decision to withdraw army personnel attached to the security detail of the former president and replace them with police officers.

The Speaker abruptly suspended the sittings but it was too late to bring the situation under control.

Len Norris



"" ... and now you leave these happy, carefree school days, to make your way in this pension planned, health insured, paid holiday, guaranteed annual wage world ... ""

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.

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- In the section for designation of your gift, click on the drop down menu to select the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund.
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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

Member News

Please send news about your activities to ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com for the next newsletter.

Where Are They Now?

Each issue we ask a former Member of the Legislative Assembly a series of questions. What drew them to public service; what lessons have they taken away; and, most important, what are they doing now.



In this issue Lorne Nicolson is in the spotlight. Lorne represented Nelson-Creston for the NDP from 1972 to 1986. He served in the provincial cabinet as a minister without portfolio and as Minister of Housing.

1. What prompted you to seek public office?

I never sought public office. Through Frances' family I came to know Senator Sid Smith of Kamloops who was then Speaker and also Don Lanskaill of COFI. I was still in university and we discussed the Democratic primary where a friend of Sid (Sen. Stewart Symington) was challenged by JFK and a few others. This is to say that politics was not something too remote from my understanding. My first vote was CCF but on two occasions I chose the "best man for the job" and strayed from my natural allegiance.

Having served on the executive of my union during my nine years as a worker/student I felt I could best serve the BCTF as the chairman of our local's agreements committee. One year the compulsory binding agreement process did not work. It became high profile in the Nelson Daily News. Members of the local NDP executive approached me about being a candidate. They caught me at a vulnerable moment. In fact my concerns about local climate change caused by the Columbia River dams had me wondering why none of our candidates (including Jack Munro) ever ran twice.

2. Which political figure most influenced you?

JFK raised almost everyone's aspirations in the early 60s. However, my greatest influence was Dave Barrett. I first met Dave at the Berger/Barrett convention (1969). Dave was standing in his stocking feet atop his Hotel Vancouver room's bed, making his pitch to the dedicated and the curious. I was curious and committed to Tom Berger but Dave made a positive and lasting impression.

3. Was it hard making the transition from private life to public life?

My transition was gradual. I first became a candidate in 1969, but after losing the first attempt I continued to

campaign at every opportunity. My brand and credibility became established and I no longer had to tell people who I was. The biggest adjustment was made by the family and even to this day I might learn from my sons and Frances something that happened years ago. It was difficult to leave the students behind.

4. What was your biggest challenge returning to the private sector?

I was fortunate to have had four terms. While my pension is not the maximum, it is comfortable. I was able to run a small computer business for 15 years before retiring at age 65. I have, however, seen young professionals enter the Legislature and, having served only one term, try to return to a practice or business that is almost non-existent.

I found that entering the private sector was very positive. I was invited to join the Rotary Club and found that former political adversaries were in fact friends and colleagues. Rather than characterize people as NDP or SC it became MAC or PC.

5. What was the biggest lesson that has stuck with you since being an MLA?

"Don't set your beliefs aside because of the heat of the moment." J.S. Woodsworth and Tommy didn't do it and during the FLQ crisis Randolph Harding (former MLA and MP) didn't either. I can't remember how many times a Japanese Canadian told me: "You have our vote; we remember Mr. Woodsworth".

6. Tell us a bit about your active or part-time professional interests.

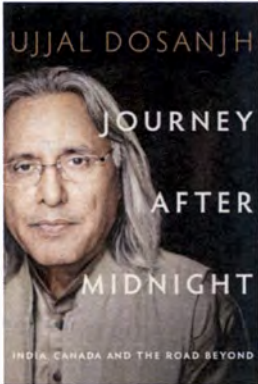
Frances and I have been "parent" to several Rotary exchange students. I tutored several students in Math 12. Return visits keep us abreast of the global view through the eyes of youth. With some you visit through email, Skype or Facebook but with one there have been four visits here in Canada.

I have returned to tournament bridge after a hiatus of 40 years. I was fortunate to make the final day of the Canadian Open Pairs. In the friendly culture of bridge, one of my limited skill can compete with the Jack Nicklaus of bridge. I enjoy OOTD. Meeting with old NDP colleagues seems to be more often at memorial services. What I can't find anywhere else is the opportunity to meet former members from other parties – unplugged! Lunch with Ken Jones and Val Roddick on the ferry gave me an opportunity to see that our values are more similar than diverse. I think that the association keeps hope alive for what the Legislature can be.

Member News

Ujjal's 'Journey After Midnight'

Ujjal Dosanjh's memoir, "The Journey After Midnight," is now in the bookstores.



It is described by his publisher, Figure.1, as a "deeply personal and thoughtful memoir of Ujjal's journey from his beloved India to the upper echelons of Canadian politics, a story that is both wise and compelling about a man passionate about social justice and democratic process who continues to rail against injustice and corruption wherever it is happening in the world."

Ujjal's description is less flamboyant. He says: "It captures my entire life; and only about a quarter of it is about my life after I first got elected in 1991. It is the story of a kid born and raised in a dusty village in the Indian Punjab, travelling to England and then to Canada."

He adds: "With a laptop in hand and as a two finger typist it took me a year and a half to produce a first draft of close to 300,000 words. I knew it was way too long. Chris Lobante my publisher suggested I chop off at least

50,000 words; I eliminated 100,000 of them. Then the editor Barbara Pulling took over and further shortened and shaped it.

The official book launch was May 17 at the University of British Columbia Robert H Lee Alumni Center with more than 250 guests attending.

Senior CBC TVB correspondent Terry Milewski says Ujjal tells "a crackling, only-in-Canada story."

"What a journey! Up from the mud of rural poverty, a Punjabi peasant strikes out for the new world, then defies terrorist death threats to become the leader of Canada's third-largest province and the only federal cabinet minister with eighty-four stitches in his skull," Milewski says.

Michael on the move

After many years in Victoria, Cliff Michael has notified us that he is moving back to Salmon Arm, effective June 1st.

Cliff was the Social Credit MLA for Shuswap - Revelstoke, elected in 1983 and re-elected in 1986. He is a former Director of this Association.

Letters

Qualicum seniors debate GP shortage

Dear Editor:

Many readers of this newsletter are former colleagues and that means they are seniors and some may be experiencing the same problem finding a GP as we are in Qualicum Beach where I am now retired.

It's amazing what an issue like access to a general practitioner can do to turn out a crowd, and that happened here in May.

More than 100 people - mostly senior citizens - skipped regular dinner plans to attend a meeting at Qualicum Beach Civic Centre for a discussion on why the Parksville-Qualicum Beach area is so poorly served by doctors.

Local physician Dr. Mark Morris told that meeting that by his estimate, and the estimate of other health care professionals working on the issue, the region needs at least 10 new physicians to catch up to the level of care

that people should expect in Canada plus another 12 to make up for expected physician retirements in the next few years.

Estimates are that 4,500 citizens in the Parksville-Qualicum Beach area have no access to a general practitioner.

Following a presentation outlining preventive measures people can take to help reduce the strain on the local system, the audience brought up a number of issues including stories of lack of access to GPs, difficulty in having new physicians get access to a patient's health records kept elsewhere and the shortage of walk-in clinics between Nanaimo and Courtenay.

Jim Bennett
Qualicum Beach

(Publisher's note: Jim Bennett was ministerial assistant to Social Credit cabinet minister Grace McCarthy in the 1980s. Jim can be reached at jim.bennett@shaw.ca)

The Coq at 30 ... a vital link to the hinterland

The first phase of the Coquihalla Highway opened 30 years ago in May 1986 just in time to deliver thousands of Interior British Columbians to the doorstep of Expo '86.



When you take the long view of the challenges linking the coast of BC to the hinterland, this amazing highway represents the something of a transportation version of manifest destiny.

Travel in BC in the early days was a story of people with a purpose, pushing through heavy forest, climbing sheer canyon walls and finding hidden passages through seemingly impassable mountain ranges. Fighting cold, loneliness, bleak wilderness and even one another, they blazed hard won paths to reach gold fields and fertile valleys.

In most of the province, the original trail builders were First Nations whose people used these routes for millennia. They were followed by explorers and fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Fur Trading Company. Then came the Gold Rush of the mid-1800s. The mad dash for riches made road building such an urgent necessity that many difficult natural obstacles were overcome. The trails blazed then were the forerunners of today's highways.

Building roads in various parts of the province proceeded slowly during the early part of the 20th century and there was no cohesive system. It was not until after the Second World War that any attempt was made to bring the various isolated parts of BC together by road. This started the modern age of highway building to match the phenomenal growth of the province's economy, its population and its motor vehicle registration.

We jump to the period between 1979 and 1990; a new and ambitious route was built into the Interior from Hope through the Coquihalla Pass. The Coquihalla Highway was built in three phases. Phase I, from Hope to Merritt, was completed in 1986. This involved some 137 kilometres of heavy construction through a mountain pass and hill country. Phase II, from Merritt to Kamloops, opened in September 1987. The third phase, the Okanagan Connector, running from Merritt to Peachland, represented a major construction and engineering challenge. The total cost of all three phases of the Coquihalla was \$955 million.

(Source: Frontier to Freeway, A short illustrated history of the roads in British Columbia.)

Let's play Coquihalla trivia:

The Coq starts near sea level at Hope and then gains over one kilometre in elevation in less than 50km distance. It was named the Coquihalla because it generally follows the Coquihalla River and uses the Coquihalla Pass.

The length of the Coquihalla, per construction phase:

- Phase 1 from Hope to Merritt: 110km, May 1986
- Phase 2 from Merritt to Kamloops: 87km, September 1987
- Phase 3 from Merritt to Kelowna: 127km, October 1990

Highest elevations:

- Coquihalla summit: 1,244 m
- Surrey Lake summit: 1,444 m

Since the winter of 1990/1991:

- Less than one closure per year due to avalanche hazard, specifically .96 per year over 25 years.
- 13 out of the last 25 years had no closures due to avalanche hazard.
- Of all the 24 avalanche closures, 11 were under two hours.
- The Coquihalla averages 1,350mm of precipitation of which 1,150mm falls as snow.
- The annual average peak snowpack (depth of snow on the ground) is 235cm (almost eight feet) at the summit.

Winter maintenance:

- Average amount of winter abrasive used yearly: 40,000 m³.
- Average amount of anti-icing liquid used yearly: three million litres.
- During storm events, in addition to other equipment and snow plows VSA maintenance uses three snow plows that can clear two lanes at a time. Two of these plows spend 100 per cent of their time on the Coquihalla from Hope to Kamloops.

The top three reasons for closures on the Coquihalla (in order of time spent) are:

- Vehicle incidents (such as stalls, vehicle fires, trucks spinning out, etc.).
- Collisions (when a vehicle crashes into something) and the subsequent investigation and clean up.
- High avalanche hazards.

(Source: Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.)