

## Rest in peace, Dief the Chief; we've got this one

Former prime minister John Diefenbaker must be rolling in his grave as "freedom convoy" disrupters have turned his Canadian Bill of Rights into a coupon for chaos.

In this issue of OOTD, veteran journalist David Climenhaga helps us understand the manipulation of the Bill of Rights by anti-vax extremists on Pages 12 and 13.

Giving this some timely historical context, on Page 14, we celebrate the signing of the proclamation to repatriate the Canadian Constitution 40 years ago on April 17th. The homecoming Constitution was accompanied by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and an amending formula that no longer required an appeal to the British Parliament.

Freedom convoy "scholars" apparently missed the history lesson that taught us that the Canadian Charter all but supplanted the Bill. The Charter is a bill of rights to protect certain political rights, legal rights and human rights of people in Canada from the policies and actions of all levels of government. An additional goal of the Charter is to unify Canadians around a set of principles that embody those rights.



The Charter was preceded by the Canadian Bill of Rights, enacted by Diefenbaker in 1960. However, the Bill of Rights was only a federal statute and was limited in its effectiveness because it was not directly applicable to provincial laws. This motivated some within government to establish an unambiguously constitutional-level bill of rights for all Canadians.

### Turn to Page 16 for an important member survey

For many years, the highlight of the AFMLABC social calendar has been the annual banquet. Well, that came to a grinding halt in 2020 when COVID-19 turned our lives upside down and the gathering at Government House was cancelled. It was cancelled again in 2021 and at their March Zoom meeting, the Executive decided, with much reluctance, to forego an Association fall dinner again. It is simply impossible to predict, with any confidence, what lies ahead at the end of the summer.

To ensure the 2023 gathering is one to remember, the Executive does not want to proceed without member input.

Please respond to the survey on the back page. Clip it out and mail to the address shown. With the help of the Legislature Library staff we will be able to post this survey on our website ([www.formerbcmla.com](http://www.formerbcmla.com)) in early April and you can submit it with a click of your cursor rather than hassle with snail mail.

Her Honour

The Honourable Janet Austin, 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:

P.O. Box 31009  
University Heights P.O.  
Victoria, B.C. V8N 6J3

Or emailed to [ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com](mailto:ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com)  
or [ootd@shaw.ca](mailto:ootd@shaw.ca)

Editor: Brian Kieran  
Layout/Production/Research: Rob Lee

Association Membership (former MLAs) dues are \$60.00 per year. Annual subscription rate is \$40.00 for those who are not Association Members.  
Payment can be sent to the above address.

### Board of Directors 2021-2022

**John Les** ..... President  
**Diane Thorne** ..... Vice President  
**Bruce Strachan** ..... Secretary  
**Patrick Wong** ..... Treasurer  
**Jeff Bray** ..... Past President

### Directors

**Harry Bloy**                      **Penny Priddy**  
**Ida Chong**                      **Tim Stevenson**  
**Dave Hayer**  
**Ken Jones (Membership Chair)**

### Honourary Directors

**Hon. Iona Campagnolo, PC, CM, OBC, LL.D**  
**Hon. Steven L. Point, OBC**  
**Hon. Judith Guichon, OBC**

### Honourary Members

**Hon. Raj Chouhan,**  
Speaker of the Legislature  
**Joan Barton, MLSc., MPA**  
**Bob McClelland**

### Honourary Life Members

**Jim Hume**  
**Ian D. Izard, QC,** Honourary Solicitor  
**E. George MacMinn, QC, OBC**  
**(The late) Hugh Curtis**

*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 those of you who, when sending in your Member dues or subscription renewals, added a donation to help cover production costs for the newsletter.

### Dues, Subscriptions and Donations

**Tony Brummet,** Osoyoos  
**Duane Crandall,** Golden  
**Craig East,** Surrey  
**Sue Hammell,** Denman Island  
**Dave Hayer,** Surrey  
**Gordon Hogg,** White Rock  
**Ken Johnston,** Richmond  
**Ken Jones,** White Rock  
**Penny Priddy,** Surrey  
**David Schreck,** North Vancouver  
**Shirley Stocker,** New Westminster  
**Diane Thorne,** Coquitlam

# From the Editor's Desk

Nationally, on the conservative side of the political spectrum, a pivotal chapter in the evolution of the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) is playing out on centre stage. Social media and the Twitterverse are smouldering as many thousands of Canadians on the centre-right ponder some starkly opposing and often rancorous leadership positions.

I believe it is a phenomenon that merits exploration on these pages since it is being played out so publicly. Ultra-sensitive to my non-partisan mandate, I have opted to approach the subject in this issue through the neutral lens of academia and by delving deep into the media archives. Dr. David Black, an associate professor in the School of Communication and Culture at Royal Roads University in Victoria, explores a Conservative "Catch-22" on Pages 6 and 7.

I also found an analysis written seven years ago by Tasha Kheiriddin and published by iPolitics. It examines the CPC as it emerged and re-positioned after the Stephen Harper years, and it ponders the need for the party to rethink its wooing of the religious right. This piece is timeless.

I want to thank veteran BC communications guru Jess Ketchum for his article on cancer on Pages 4 and 5. As Jess's long-time friend, I am privileged to celebrate his courageous and successful battle with HPV Squamous Cell Carcinoma and to marvel at his unwavering determination to keep supporting the amazing work of the BC Cancer Foundation while fighting his own battle.

Finally, I got a call last week from an association member who had suffered an AFMLABC/OOTD dues brain cramp. A bit forgetful? Dues/subscriptions are due every January, and those members who have paid are thanked by name on this page in each issue. As well, Board of Directors Membership Chair Ken Jones is happy to review your status. He can be reached at [kenjones@gmail.com](mailto:kenjones@gmail.com).

# The President's Report

The AFMLABC executive held a Zoom meeting recently to discuss several topics relevant to the association.

The most urgent item discussed was whether to organize an annual dinner for members this year. As everyone knows, due to COVID-19 restrictions we've been unable to schedule this event for the past two years, which meant there was a certain eagerness to proceed with a dinner this fall.

However, it's also evident there is still some uncertainty as to whether there will be some level of COVID-related restrictions in place later this year. Public health officials continue to advise caution.

With the above in mind, it was reluctantly, but unanimously, decided not to plan for a dinner this year. It was felt it's better to wait for a time next year when the conditions will be in place for a truly successful event that we can plan with confidence.

During our discussion it was suggested it would be useful to consult with our membership with regard to the annual dinner. On the back page of this issue, you will find a questionnaire. Please let us know your preferences. Your input is important, and we look forward to your suggestions and ideas!

Finally, just a reminder that quite a number of members still have dues outstanding. We don't issue invoices so a friendly reminder via OOTD is the only nudge you'll get! Annual dues are only \$60 (although many round up to \$100!). Payment can be made online through the AFMLABC website, [www.formerbcmla.com](http://www.formerbcmla.com).

Enjoy this issue of OOTD!  
John Les, President



## We give where we live.®

With **\$13 billion** invested in new communications infrastructure and operations across British Columbia, building on the **\$3 billion** invested in the province last year, we're proud to be a part of B.C.'s future.



Through these investments in our network TELUS PureFibre will soon reach more than **1.6 million households and businesses** in B.C. and our 5G network will connect more than **200 communities**, many in rural and Indigenous communities



**TELUS Agriculture** will deliver cutting-edge solutions to B.C.'s farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers across the entire food value chain to ensure these homegrown industries continue to grow.



With **25,000 employees and retirees** living in B.C. and **12,000 jobs** through our vast partner ecosystem, no organization is more committed to this province than TELUS.



**TELUS Health** puts innovative healthcare in your hands through innovative digital solutions, and provides our partners with tools to fight COVID-19.

With more than **\$210 million** and **6.4 million hours** contributed to charities and community organizations in B.C. we're proud to be a part of where you live.



---

# When cancer comes calling, a team responds

By Jess Ketchum

“Your biopsy confirms you have CANCER!”

If you have not received that news personally, someone you know, someone you are close to, someone you love, has or will. BC Cancer estimates that 30,960 British Columbians will receive that devastating news this year.

Our premier got that news last year for, I understand, a second time, and thankfully it appears his treatment has succeeded. I received that news about 18 months ago, and recent scans indicate mine has worked as well.

In my case, it was HPV Squamous Cell Carcinoma, and unfortunately, it went undetected as there were no symptoms other than sinus-type headaches and earaches. COVID-19 meant I could not visit my doctor, so we treated it as a sinus issue. I eventually had a virtual session with a sinus specialist, with no relief. I was on waiting lists at three different hospitals for a CT scan, which, months later, changed my life. I had cancer.

I want to pause at this point to explain something. I had previously spent five years on the BC Cancer Foundation Board, three as its Chair. This amazing organization raises tens of millions of dollars annually for cancer research in BC. That experience brought me into close contact with the team at the BC Cancer Agency, doctors, researchers, technicians, and administration.

I became familiar with a center of excellence that British Columbians should be very proud of but have too little knowledge of and appreciation for. I got to know doctors who worked every day at saving lives but who were also dedicated to conducting world-leading research. I became familiar with how they would give their free time to join me and others presenting to potential donors.

Once my time as a board member timed out, I was asked to volunteer as one of two lay people on the Clinical Trials Committee. Doctors, researchers, and administrators considered what clinical trials would be undertaken. I had the opportunity to see how important research is and how passionate the people are who are doing this world-leading work.



*Jess and his primary care givers, wife Ramona and Sophie.*

One of the factors leading to BC Cancer having an extraordinary team of medical professionals is the Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre (GSC). This institution, world-renowned for DNA sequencing, was initiated with significant support from the BC Cancer Foundation. Its global credibility grew when it was the first to sequence the genome of the SARs virus. The GSC has drawn young researchers from around the globe who were excited about collaborating with the GSC on cancer research. Its Director, Dr. Marco Marra, has been recognized as one of the foremost genomic scientists in the world.

The personal exposure that I had to these extraordinary people gave me great confidence that we would be successful in defeating my cancer. I was aware of the risks, but I had been exposed to so many breakthroughs in cancer treatment right here at home. How could I lose?

I decided to approach my cancer as a project, and my first decision was to recognize that I had an amazing team. I had a radiation oncologist, a chemotherapy oncologist, and as I had signed up for a clinical trial, another specialized in head and neck cancers.

My cancer was T4N2, meaning the tumour under my tongue was large, and the cancer had spread to lymph nodes on both sides of my neck. The surgery option was eliminated because of the tumour's location. As the cancer was advanced, I was advised that they were going "throw the kitchen sink at me" with 35 radiation treatments and a chemotherapy concoction with the sole purpose of increasing the efficacy of the radiation.

*continued next page*

I had to have a radiation mask fitted so they could bolt me down to the radiation table, ensuring my head remained stationary. Secondly, I had three molars removed as the radiation would destroy them. Finally, I had a "port" installed in my chest, allowing daily infusion of the trial drug/placebo, hydrating fluid when required and also to draw blood.

The treatment regime can be debilitating, and one of the best things to happen to me was the support of friends. A friend would pick me up at home every day and another would drive me home every afternoon. My group of amazing buddies provided service every single day of my treatment.

Most days started at the clinic at 8:15 a.m. and finished around noon, except on chemo days when I was there all day. Radiation required technicians to bolt me down for about 15 minutes in the radiation unit. Visualizing skiing down my favourite Whistler runs or walking down a beach in the Turks and Caicos Islands helped.

Now, radiation and chemo are painless, but it is the after-effects that get you. As I had a very difficult time swallowing and had no appetite or ability to smell or taste food, I lost 80 pounds. I went from being a high-energy guy to not being able to get out of bed without help. My balance was shot! Radiation scarring and swelling on one side of my tongue impacted my ability to speak. Those of you who know me would recognize that not being able to eat or speak would be devastating for me, but here is the real downer – alcohol still burns my mouth and throat and tastes awful. My wine collection is just that!

The great news is that, after what appears to be very successful treatment, I am putting the after-effects behind me as well. Some remain challenging, but they will diminish with the support of wonderful therapists at BC Cancer.

My experience with the Foundation led me to ask questions about my cancer. There are so many unanswered questions about head and neck cancers that we are launching a research project that, over two years, is aimed at providing some answers. Most people are exposed at one time or another to the HPV virus, but in some, it results in cancer. Why? Radiation treatment works for some but not for others. In fact, tumours continue to grow. Why? Some patients experience a reoccurrence. Why? The fact that we have brilliant



*Jess masked and ready for one of his 35 radiation treatments at BC Cancer Agency.*

medical researchers right here in BC along with the GSC makes this research possible, and it will save lives!

The lead researchers on this project, entitled Personalized Approaches to the Treatment of Head and Neck Cancers (PATH), are GSC Director Dr. Marco Marra; Medical Oncologists Drs. Janessa Laskin, Cheryl Ho and Nicole Chau; and Radiation Oncologists Drs. Sarah Hamilton and Eric Tran. Drs. Laskin, Tran, and Hamilton were on my Dream Team, and I will never thank them enough.

The love of my life, Ramona (my primary caregiver assisted by our pooch Sophie) and I have decided to provide initial financial support to this research. The goal is to raise \$5.3 million. If you would like to support this work, consider donating to the BC Cancer Foundation, 150-686 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1G1 and write "PATH" and my name in the memo line of the cheque. Or, you can donate online at <http://donate.bccancerfoundation.com/goto/path>. For further information about making donations over time, please contact Sandi London at 604-877-6219 or [sandi.london@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:sandi.london@bccancer.bc.ca).

For those of you who had the good fortune to know my mentor, boss and friend, the Honourable Alex Fraser, you would know that Alex had a similar cancer. Rather ironic, isn't it? While significant progress has been made since we lost Alex almost 33 years ago, there is so much more to be accomplished.

**(Throughout his career, Jess has been a highly sought-after communications advisor who started his business after serving as a senior staffer to the Honourable Alex Fraser and VP of the Expo 86 Corporation.)**

# Conservatism's Catch-22 ... “anything but dull”

By Dr. David Black  
Royal Roads University

Conservatism in the post-Second World War era has been anything but dull. Among the major traditions of political philosophy and practice in the Western world, it's ironically the one associated with social order, traditional values and a go-slow approach to progress that has experienced more change than the other great democratic lineages of the centre and left respectively – liberalism and social democracy.

There are three crises now at large in conservatism, both in Canadian politics and in conservative thought, that make it an interesting place from which to observe politics both as ideas and art.

## (1) The intraparty struggles within the Conservative Party

Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's roots in the Reform Party, where he was first policy director and then an MP, would place him on the right of the Conservative Party. But his pragmatism generally tempered his purity in ideological matters.

That meant the Conservative Party he led almost from its inception in December 2003, created through a merger of the Canadian Alliance (the rebranded Reformers) and what remained of the Progressive Conservatives after their three disastrous elections in 1993, 1997 and 2000, was one he was singularly able to keep united.

His credibility with these now old-school populists, combined with the realism that led him to bring the moderates onside and campaign as a centre-right candidate, was the winning compromise that allowed him to preside over Canadian politics for nine years.

That divide has not disappeared since Harper's defeat in 2015. It has dramatically worsened with the rise of the new “freedom convoy” populism. The principal declared contenders for the 2022 leadership contest – like Pierre Poilievre, Jean Charest, Leslyn Lewis, and Patrick Brown – are impressive in different ways. However, none have Harper's bona fides among the right-leaning caucus and base of the party, while as yet at the same time also showing his ability to keep electability uppermost in mind.

All this points to a most Conservative Catch-22. The candidate likely to win the leadership, given the rightward tilt of the membership, is not one who can appeal to the broader voting public. And, the candidate most likely to credibly represent a centre-right mainstream identity of the party is not one who can survive a leadership contest.



The arc that introduced Erin O'Toole as a “Take Canada Back” populist to win the leadership saw him revert to his career moderation during the general election and then saw him ousted by the True Blue believers after his losing election campaign. That sequence underlines the self-defeating contortions employed to square the circle. And, it shows how difficult it will be to repeat Harper's formula with a party that has since 2015 moved further right.

## (2) Conservatism as an insurgent philosophy

The late British conservative intellectual Roger Scruton described conservatism as an insurgent philosophy, by which he meant that it had positioned itself as challenging the liberalism that had primarily formed politics and culture during the emergence of the modern West.

Since its formal inception in the writings of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Anglo-Irish writer and politician Edmund Burke, conservatism has done the world a service by asking hard questions about liberalism, modernity, capitalism, and the values and institutions created in their names.

However, in recent decades, this fighting posture has turned inward. Of course, internal ideological strife is not limited to conservatism. The federal NDP confronted its neo-Marxist Waffle faction in the early 1970s. And in the 1990s, the Red and Blue Liberals – identified respectively with Jean Chretien and Paul Martin – clashed over their contrasting bigger-government and business-minded neo-liberal visions.

These civil wars had a self-correcting pendulum shape to them. They provided the Liberal and NDP parties with a reset. However, conservatism's evolution has resembled a volcano, leading to occasional eruptions that have hobbled proponents advancing the cause, leaving a certain amount of damage in their wake.

By way of example, the Reform Party's rapid rise in the 1980s and 1990s gave voice to the demographic growth and economic power of Western Canada. It also instilled a moral passion in a brand of conservatism that, in the Mulroney era, many felt had abandoned Main Street for Bay Street.

*continued next page*

Preston Manning's movement came with a policy vision that argued the government had become too large to be responsive and needed measures drawn from the repertoire of direct democracy to fix it. This renewal left Canadian conservatism better able to contrast itself with its main Liberal competition, albeit at the cost of leaving its center-right a permanent minority in the Conservative Party thereafter.

Today's convoy conservatism is not your mother's populism. With its flag-waving, horn-honking carnival ethos, it resembles the U.S. Tea Party movement from the 2008 Great Recession or a roving Trump rally – all protest, no policy. Moreover, lacking a cogent message, apart from opposing vaccine mandates even as these have largely disappeared in COVID-19's endemic stage, it has attracted enough opportunistic interest from the far-right – anti-government radicalism, white nationalism, Wexit-style separatism – to make it dangerous.

The risk is not just to the electoral viability of the Conservative Party, as key figures like Poilievre – the prohibitive favourite to win the leadership race – and interim leader Candice Bergen have given it a platform. Rather than Canadian conservatism playing its customary role policing the boundaries of the politically acceptable further to its right, this attention-grabbing tolerance for the far-right invites the normalization of ideas that are better left in the shadows.

### (3) The politics of reality


It's rare that the kinds of things discussed in a university seminar room intersect with practical politics. But in these years of cultural crisis – when people cannot agree on the same facts, when they “speak their truths” rather than answer to evidence, and lose themselves to imaginary realities manufactured in social media and acted upon in real life – questions about meaning and rationality have become urgently topical. Conservatism has shown itself especially vulnerable to this disorder but also uniquely positioned to address it.

David Brooks, a conservative thinker, says a core strength of conservatism is its “epistemological modesty.” By this, he means its skepticism that society is perfectible, that rationality can be relied on to guide us in everything, and that forward motion through history is certain. Instead, conservatism argues that rationality is fallible, that the accumulated wisdom of the ages as reflected in culture offsets its limitations and, that while social change is possible, so too is an often-savage regression.

The new populism does not promise the revival that Reform's reinvention of Canadian conservatism did. Rather, it will either make the Conservative Party unelectable for a few cycles or, should an eloquent champion like Poilievre be successful at winning power, render Canadian politics unrecognizable.

That said, it is only some other Conservative politician, one drawing on conservatism's heritage as a body of thought patient with a broken world, who can credibly address the genuine fear, anxiety and resentment that partly fuels these trucker rallies, and give it a more constructive and legitimate outlet.

**(Dr. David Black is an associate professor in the School of Communication and Culture at Royal Roads University in Victoria and a frequent media commentator on political, media and cultural topics.)**




**BRITISH COLUMBIANS BENEFIT FROM PERSONAL SERVICE**

As B.C. continues to grow, so does the demand for personalized service. That's why there are offices in virtually every community, with over 15,000 insurance brokers province-wide, ready to serve. Brokers provide families with advice and better coverage for their homes, vehicles and businesses.

Working together in the community, brokers help families by providing information about safety, emergency preparedness and other local issues.

For more on insurance brokers and the benefits they provide to B.C. families go to [bcbroker.ca](http://bcbroker.ca).

**HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES**



*Seven years ago ... could be yesterday*

# Rebuilding the CPC: Cut loose the religious right

By Tasha Kheiriddin  
Published by iPolitics  
October 2015

Red, blue or purple? As it nurses its bruises from the election, the Conservative Party is asking itself what its complexion ought to be in the future.

Much of this will depend not just on the new leader, but on his or her team. Will they hail from the western wing of the party or the eastern? Will they take up the anti-elitist tone favoured by grassroots populists or the less strident strains of “Red Tory” centrists? And how will they rebuild the “big tent” needed to gain and hold power?

Some say this tent was torn apart in the recent election. Truth is, it was never rebuilt after the merger of the Progressive Conservative and Alliance parties in 2003. Instead of a big tent, the Conservatives created a series of pup tents formed of niche voter bases. But while each niche got its own policy plank, there was no overarching cover – no shared narrative or idea – to keep them together and out of the rain. And sometimes, promises to one group actually had the effect of turning off other groups critical to re-election.

A salient example of this is the series of Tory policies, small and large, designed to please the party's fundamentalist Christian base, situated chiefly in Western Canada. These included the 2010 decision to explicitly exclude funding for abortion from Canada's UN Maternal Health Initiative, reaffirmed in 2013 even for victims of rape. Over the years, this aspect of the initiative became a rallying cry for every pro-choice group in the country, overshadowing all the good things the initiative did – things that would have appealed to a broader group of voters.

Called on to defend the decision to withhold funding for abortion at the Munk Debate, Stephen Harper said that “we fund things that unite, not divide.” Coming from a party that loved wedge politics, this didn't quite convince. The real rationale went more like this: Since nothing would be done for “the base” on the abortion issue at home, something would be done overseas.

This type of thinking also informed the creation of an Office for the Defence of Religious Freedoms in 2013 to help persecuted religious minorities (such as Christians in China). Creating a new \$5 million bureaucracy just as



Ottawa was cutting back the diplomatic service elsewhere seemed counter-intuitive to many small-government conservatives – but it appealed to fundamentalist voters.

Then, during the 2015 election, it was revealed that the PMO was involved in suspending refugee applications for several weeks earlier that year, allegedly to give preference to certain groups that were being persecuted due to the conflict in the Middle East, notably Christians.

This decision contributed to alienating voters in other bases key to re-election, such as new Canadians and Liberal-Tory swing voters. It also exposed the Conservatives to accusations of hypocrisy. Harper argued against religious fundamentalism when it offended the expression of gender equality rights (such as in the context of a citizenship ceremony) but then appealed to the religious beliefs of other supporters to get votes. Worse, it fueled charges that Harper was an Islamophobe who wanted to keep Muslims out of the country.

Then there's the matter of the Conservative party's support for the State of Israel. While there are many reasons for Canada to support Israel as a strategic ally, a beacon of democracy and a homeland for the Jewish people, to fundamentalist Christians, Israel also represents the Holy Land – the place to which they are convinced the Messiah will someday return. For many voters, Harper's refusal to criticize any actions taken by Israel – ever – went far beyond the bounds of an alliance and bred a sense of cynicism about his motivations. Ironically, this could end up hurting Israel instead of helping it by undermining Canada's status as a strong but fair defender of the Jewish state on the world stage.

*[continued next page](#)*



Similarly, the Conservatives' handling of the environment portfolio backfired against the greater interests of both the party and the country. The Conservatives' hostility towards the science of climate change went well beyond mere skepticism – and it held a certain appeal to anti-science fundamentalist voters. But dragging Canada down to environmental pariah status had the perverse effect of killing the Tories' pet project, the Keystone Pipeline, by giving President Barack Obama no political cover for approval. Keystone and other pipeline projects would have shifted more economic and political power to the West; the damage done to the Conservatives' long-term prospects arguably outweighed any benefit they got from anti-science votes in the fundamentalist 'base.'

The Conservative party's future as a big tent party cannot rest on religious factionalism of any kind. Navigating the separation of church, party, and state will be an important challenge for the next leader – right up there with balancing geography, ideology and all the other elements needed to rebuild the party.



The next person to assume the mantle of leadership must be a unifying, inclusive figure with a team to match. And Conservatives of all stripes need to recognize that while religion has a place in public discourse and the social fabric of our nation, faith should not drive party policy.

(Tasha Kheiriddin is a political writer and broadcaster who frequently comments in English and French. After practising law and a stint in the government of Mike Harris, Tasha became the Ontario director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and co-wrote the 2005 bestseller, *Rescuing Canada's Right: Blueprint for a Conservative Revolution*. Andrew Scheer led the Conservatives from May 2017 to August 2020; Erin O'Toole from August 2020 to February 2022.)



## **2022 Member Dues and OOTD subscriptions are due!**

Annual membership for former MLAs in the Association is \$60 (unchanged from previous years) which includes the subscription for Orders of the Day (OOTD).

Fans of OOTD who are not former MLAs/Association members should send payment of \$40 to remain on the subscription list.

**Cheques should be made out to: The Association of Former MLAs of BC  
and mailed to: PO Box 31009  
University Heights PO  
Victoria, BC V8N 6J3**

**You can also make your payment electronically by going to our website [www.formerbcmla.com](http://www.formerbcmla.com).**

- **Go to the Payments page in the navigation bar and follow the prompts.**
- **Include your name, contact info, and purpose for payment in the Comments section on the Payments form.**

**If you have questions about your current membership/subscription status, contact Membership Chair Ken Jones at [kenjones@gmail.com](mailto:kenjones@gmail.com).**

# Stats Can reviews two years of pandemic upheaval

Statistics Canada has long had the privilege of serving Canadians by providing them with high-quality information on society and the economy, says Anil Arora, Chief Statistician of Canada.

"The pandemic has strengthened Statistics Canada's commitment to sharing new, timely information that gives insights on how COVID-19 has impacted Canadian households and businesses," Arora says.

**For the full report go to: [www.statcan.gc.ca/en/covid19](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/covid19) ... and click on the link in the Highlights section.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken up many aspects of Canadian life. On the pandemic's second anniversary, Statistics Canada reviewed the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 across the country.

Here are the highlights:

**Hate crimes** – The number of hate crimes rose by 37 per cent in 2020, with 718 more incidents reported to police than in 2019. The total of 2,669 crimes is the highest number since comparable data has been available. About 60 per cent of reported incidents were motivated by race or ethnicity, with the pandemic seeing an increase in crimes targeting Black, Asian and Indigenous communities.

**Social unrest** – In March and April 2020, 40 per cent of Canadians reported feeling very or extremely concerned about the possibility of social unrest. Individuals who anticipated the pandemic would affect their finances were almost twice as likely to express such concern. Sixty-one per cent of those expecting a personal financial impact from COVID-19 were worried about civil disorder, compared to 32 per cent of those who did not foresee an impact.

**Births and deaths** – 2020 saw population growth drop to 0.4 per cent, a level unseen since the First World War. That same year, annual deaths surpassed 300,000 for the first time in Canadian history. Life expectancy fell by 0.6 years, representing the largest single-year decline since 1921.

COVID-19 shaped Canadians' plans for parenthood – one in five adults said the pandemic made them postpone having children or choose to have fewer kids.

**Immigration** – The pandemic also negatively affected immigration, with the percentage of population growth from international migration falling from a record high of 85 per cent in 2019 to 68 per cent in 2020. Declines in student- and work-permit holders accounted for the largest net loss of non-permanent residents. However, more Canadians who lived abroad have returned home compared with those emigrating from the country for the first time since comparable records have been available. Since mid-2021, immigration numbers have been returning to pre-pandemic levels.

**Pocketbooks** – Supply chain disruptions and high demand pushed headline consumer inflation to a 30-year high of 5.1 per cent in January 2022. Year over year, food prices increased by 5.7 per cent. Canadians paid more for groceries, with prices rising by 6.5 per cent, the fastest annual rate since May 2009. Excluding gasoline, the consumer price index grew by 4.3 per cent, marking the largest annual increase since the index was first introduced in 1999. Wages, however, haven't been able to keep up -- since the spring of 2021, consumer inflation has surpassed average wage growth. In January 2022, the annual increase in average hourly wages, adjusted for changes in workforce composition during the pandemic, was only 2.7 per cent.

**Housing prices** – Home prices have continued to soar across the country. In 2021, homebuilders in most cities saw double-digit growth in the prices of new homes, with yearly increases exceeding 20 per cent in Windsor, Winnipeg, Ottawa and London. New home prices skyrocketed in the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo area, with the annual increase exceeding 30 per cent. The Bank of Canada reported that the percentage of home purchases made by first-time buyers has continued to inch lower during the pandemic. According to RBC Economics, housing affordability in the third quarter of 2021 reached a 31-year low.



---

# “It's just a military exercise” ... the lie that keeps on killing

by Jim Hume, The Old Islander

I was a little disappointed when USA President Joe Biden launched his carefully worded critique of Vladimir Putin without once chiding the Russian leader for using one of the oldest lies ever spoken by a dictator to justify the conquest of a neighbour.

Maybe President Biden isn't quite old enough to remember the last days of summer in 1939 when Germany parked what was the best trained and armed military machine in the world as close as it could to the border of Poland. Just a military exercise, German leader Adolf Hitler said, nothing to worry about. He had used the same response in the past and had never been seriously challenged – not even when his border exercises got a little wild, and several small European countries awakened one morning to find their own national flags replaced by the swastika.

The great powers – France and the British Commonwealth – were concerned, but not unduly, and the USA was resting in contented isolation. England's Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had been over to Germany for a man-to-man chat with Hitler and returned to England waving a piece of paper and proclaiming “Peace in our time.”

In mid-August 1939, Chamberlain's promise got lost in a flood of speculation on the new Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The pact, signed August 23, pledged non-aggression between Russia and Germany for at least 10 years and plans for a joint invasion of Poland by separate armies but under their national commanders.

In late August, Germany started reporting attacks on their in-training troops by Polish army units. Following one such attack, they invited a few American reporters along to see a scattering of Polish uniformed bodies repelled by vigilant German soldiers. It was later established the Germans had set up a “false flag” unit to stage the attacks.

In 1939, when the Germans finally launched their attack on Poland, they said it was simply to expand Germany's “living room.” That attack started on September 1, and two days later, at 11 o'clock on an English Sunday morning, the nation listened to Prime Minister Chamberlain, in a fragile voice, inform us that diplomacy had failed and “we are at war with Germany.”

I remember how loud the kitchen clock ticked when the radio was turned off. And, the calmness of my Dad's voice as he assured his wife, his 18-year-old daughter, and 15-year-old son that “everything will be okay, they'll never get this far.”

He was wrong. They did get “this far,” but not for six months and then only by air. After the brutal conquest of Poland, Hitler took a break for a few weeks (known as the “phony war”), then launched his “blitzkrieg” that ravaged the Netherlands, Belgium and France and almost destroyed the entire British army before it was plucked from the beaches of Dunkirk.

We did wonder from time to time if it would ever end, especially during those never-ending nights of sirens, explosions, fires, shattered homes and broken people.

Then came a series of events, each more momentous than the last in human and financial costs. But none of those costs were big or painful enough to convince humanity there must be a better way.

To continue as a big guy on the world stage, Hitler – tired of trying and failing to bring England to its knees – inexplicably turned his attention on Russia. Remember, he had a 1939 non-aggression pact stipulating that there would be no aggression between Germany and Russia for at least 10 years.

On June 22, 1941, Germany stunned the world with a surprise attack on Russia. The German army comprised three million foot soldiers, 19 Panzer divisions, 3,000 tanks, 2,500 aircraft, and 7,000 artillery pieces. What followed was a Russian “scorched earth” retreat ... nothing left for the Germans but charred remains.

The onslaught of Russian winter and inadequate supply line provisions did much to defeat the invaders. The vast German army never made it home. In its charge across the steppes of Russia, the Germans used a three-pronged attack column formation. The right column reached as far as Ukraine and died there.

I wonder if it would have helped if President Biden had reminded Mr. Putin that Ukraine once played in the big leagues and won? And that even though mentally unbalanced Hitler was an expert at “false flag” tactics, he was ultimately a loser.

---

# Dief would be ashamed of Bill of Rights twisted revival

By David Climenhaga  
AlbertaPolitics.ca

There's been a lot of chatter lately about the Diefenbaker-era Canadian Bill of Rights, especially on social media.

While it doesn't seem to have hit mainstream commentary in a big way yet, social media is full of references, usually by commenters in the darker corners of the right-wing internet, about the Canadian Bill of Rights, the federal statute enacted in 1960 when John Diefenbaker was Canada's Progressive Conservative prime minister.

With a Conservative Party of Canada leadership contest underway and a similar United Conservative Party race in Alberta possibly coming soon, this kind of commentary is bound to increase.

Creation of a bill of rights was long a goal for Diefenbaker – he had called a written charter “the only way to stop the march on the part of the government towards arbitrary power.” He is said to have started drafting a bill in 1936, still a would-be politician in Saskatchewan who couldn't seem to get elected.

That started to change in 1940 when Diefenbaker was elected to the House of Commons. By 1957 he was prime minister and in a position to turn his dream into reality – sort of.

The legislation was introduced by his government on Dominion Day 1960 and was swiftly passed and enacted.

It never lived up to Diefenbaker's dreams, though. It was not constitutionally entrenched. As well, it conflicted with other acts. When this was pointed out in legal arguments, judges mostly shrugged their shoulders and said that was Parliament's problem. It was an ordinary law that could be amended with a simple majority. It applied only to federal statutes.

Until recently, the Canadian Bill of Rights has been all but forgotten. After all, it was for all intents and purposes subsumed into the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, part of then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau's 1982 constitutional reform package that patriated, as we all used to say, Canada's Constitution from the United Kingdom.



*Mr. Diefenbaker and an unidentified delegate to the Progressive Conservative General Meeting in 1961 with a copy of the Canadian Bill of Rights (Photo: The Canadian Press, University of Saskatchewan Archives).*

---

Since the Charter is entrenched in the Constitution, the supreme law of the land, all other laws must be consistent with it, “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”

Yet during the occupation of Ottawa by semi-truck-wielding right-wing extremists, especially after the implementation of the Emergencies Act, news clips often showed “Freedom Convoy” members handing out copies of the Canadian Bill of Rights.

So what's with that, anyway? I would suggest a number of things are going on.

For starters – and this is the theme of many of the wild claims about the Canadian Bill of Rights made on social media – it has become a hobbyhorse of those who Associate Chief Justice John D. Rooke once called “organized pseudolegal commercial argument litigants” who assign to it magical powers that the Charter lacks.

Naturally, this is nonsense, but as we have seen with past #Kudatah theorizing in Alberta and among the Freedom Convoyers, it is nonsense with a powerful appeal that enables its advocates to imagine they can act illegally if only they chant the right incantations before a court. (Editor: “Kudatah” is a sadly humorous Alberta misspelling of “coup d'etat.”)

That this never works seems not to dissuade them. Still, this has given rise to some recent online commentary that, deprived of context, seems off the wall to the point it's completely batty.

*[continued next page](#)*

Says one not atypical tweet: “We need to abolish the Charter. It was created with the intent to allow flexibility. Freedom is non-negotiable. We already have the Canadian Bill of Rights. Nobody can take that away from us. Ever.”

According to another: “The Charter is paving the way to communism ... Canadian Bill of Rights for the win!”

Says yet another: “All Canadians need to read the Canadian Bill of Rights. This is what we all should follow.”

One doesn't have to dig very hard to encounter pseudolegal chatter about the Canadian Bill of Rights on the internet in all its mind-numbing illogic. Needless to say, this kind of nonsense would have shocked and appalled Diefenbaker, a lawyer and, by most accounts, a very good one.

In addition, since 1982, many Canadian conservatives have been deeply ambivalent about the Charter. Distrust of the Charter and a desire to somehow weaken it or replace it with a document more compatible with conservative ideological goals has been a powerful stream in the Canadian conservative movement, as it nowadays likes to style itself.

And at least one of the differences between the Charter and the Bill is the explicit enshrinement of property rights in the Bill, a boon to the propertied classes as we have seen in the constitutional republic to our south. This is bound to appeal to mainstream conservatives and embolden their efforts to make the Charter more of a tool for the enforcement of neoliberal capitalism.

Plus, of course, a Trudeau gets the lion's share of the credit for the Charter, which is unquestionably popular with Canadians, another quality that drives many conservative leaders around the bend.

For all these reasons – with the Conservative Party of Canada, the People's Party of Canada, the Maverick Party, and numerous far-right iterations of this kind of thinking in Alberta all clamouring for a way to demonstrate their distinctiveness and appeal to voters, the unlikely revival of John Diefenbaker's Bill of Rights is not going to go away any time soon.

**(David J. Climenhaga is an award-winning journalist, author, post-secondary teacher, poet and trade union communicator. He blogs at AlbertaPolitics.ca.)**



## CANFOR IS A PROUD MEMBER OF 12 COMMUNITIES IN BC

As a company that uses a renewable resource to produce sustainable products, we are part of the climate change solution and the circular economy.



**In the last 20 years, Canfor has planted over 1 billion trees in Canada.**



Learn more at [Canfor.com](https://www.canfor.com)



40 years ago this month

## Raindrops (and politics) smudge the repatriated Constitution

By 1967, Canada had its own national symbols and possessed all the powers of an independent nation, with one exception: The power to amend its own Constitution, which could only be done by the British Parliament.

Repatriating the Constitution was a long and complicated process.

The signing of the proclamation on April 17, 1982, marked the end of efforts by many successive governments. The new Constitution was accompanied by The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and an amending formula that would no longer require an appeal to the British Parliament.

It was raining on Parliament Hill as Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau signed the Proclamation of the Constitution Act on April 17, 1982. Marks left by the raindrops as they smudged the ink can still be seen as physical reminders of the rich history of the act.

The signing of the Proclamation of the Constitution Act in 1982 was the result of more than 100 years of Canadian political debate, negotiation and progress, beginning with the signing of the British North America Act in 1867, also known as the BNA, which formed the Dominion of Canada.

Through the 20th century, Canadians worked to gain political independence and sovereignty from Britain, and by 1982, Canada had all the elements of an independent nation except authority over its Constitution.

The Constitution not only outlines Canada's system of government, laws, and civil rights, it also guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms of all Canadians through The Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Proclamation of the Constitution Act is a fundamental document for all Canadians, as it symbolizes Canada's journey from colony to independent nation.

This process was necessary because, after the Statute of Westminster in 1931, Canada allowed the British Parliament to retain the power to amend Canada's constitution until Canadian governments could agree on an all-in-Canada amending formula.

The Parliament of Canada requested that the Parliament of the United Kingdom give up its power to amend the Constitution of Canada. The enactment of the Canada Act in March 1982 by the British Parliament confirmed the Patriation of the Constitution and transferred to Canada the power of amending its own Constitution.

The Government of Quebec has never formally approved of the act though the Supreme Court concluded that Quebec's formal consent was never necessary, and 15 years after ratification, the government of Quebec "passed a resolution authorizing an amendment." Nonetheless, the lack of formal approval has remained a persistent political issue in Quebec. The Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords were designed to secure approval from Quebec, but both efforts failed.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the first part of the Constitution Act, 1982. The Charter is a bill of rights to protect certain political rights, legal rights and human rights of people in Canada from the policies and actions of all levels of government. An additional goal of the Charter is to unify Canadians around a set of principles that embody those rights.

The Charter was preceded by the Canadian Bill of Rights, which was created by the government of John Diefenbaker in 1960. However, the Bill of Rights was only a federal statute and was limited in its effectiveness because it is not directly applicable to provincial laws. This motivated some within government to establish an unambiguously-constitutional-level bill of rights for all Canadians.

The movement for human rights and freedoms that emerged after the Second World War also wanted to entrench the principles enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Charter was drafted by the federal government with consultations with the provincial governments in the years leading up to the passage of the Constitution Act.

**(Source: Government of Canada, Library and Archives)**

# Queen's "Platinum Jubilee" celebrated at Gov. House

In February, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession day was recognized. Her Majesty became the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, 70 years on the throne, in service to the people of Canada and the Commonwealth.

The Queen has travelled to Canada more than any other country. She came to BC seven times – six as Canada's sovereign and once as Princess Elizabeth, Duchess of Edinburgh. She's visited Canada 22 times since her coronation.

The Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, as the representative of Her Majesty, is celebrating the Platinum Jubilee with various events, initiatives, awards, and visits to communities throughout the province.

A time capsule, to be opened in 2072, was buried during a ceremony in the new Jubilee Garden on Commonwealth Day, March 14, 2022. The garden was designed and planted by the Friends of Government House Gardens Society. The time capsule contains letters and mementos of hope for the future from the Viceregal community and others across Canada. The Honourable Janet Austin, British Consul General in Vancouver Thomas Codrington, and Royal Commonwealth Society-Vancouver Island President David Spence delivered remarks at the ceremony.

*Burying the Platinum Jubilee Time Capsule on Commonwealth Day – (L-R) David Spence, President, Royal Commonwealth Society-Vancouver Island; Thomas Codrington, British Consul General in Vancouver; Bill Bresser, Honorary Aide-de-Camp; and the Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia.*



With the generous support of the Government House Foundation, the Honourable Janet Austin has created two Platinum Jubilee programs to support and recognize the achievements of British Columbians.

In the spirit of supporting a healthy democracy with a thriving journalistic community, the Lieutenant Governor's BC Journalism Fellowship will help fund local journalists to produce in-depth coverage of a complex, public interest topic.

The Lieutenant Governor's Art and Music Award recognizes individuals, groups and organizations who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, creativity, community engagement, passion, and commitment by fostering and mentoring others in the fields of visual arts, music or performance.

## Hugh Curtis Fund better reflects BCYP support

Dear Editor,

Readers of OOTD will be pleased to know that on March 19<sup>th</sup>, the Executive of the Association of Former MLAs of BC (AFMLABC) agreed to change the name of the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund to better reflect our support of the BC Youth Parliament.

Your readers may recall that in 2014, AFMLABC established the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund in partnership with the Victoria Foundation in memory of Hugh Curtis, a founding member and long-time secretary of the Association. The fund, which honours Hugh Curtis, provides two grants of \$500 each for a male and a female member of the British Columbia Youth Parliament (BCYP) who reside outside the Greater Victoria area. The intent is to defray their travel and living expenses while attending the December youth parliamentary session in Victoria each year.

Following a promising start, donations to the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund began to fall off, and with its limited funds, the AFMLABC found it difficult to maintain the grants. The

AFMLABC Executive realized that this was the opportune time for a name change that would strongly focus on the needs of the British Columbia Youth Parliament.

The motion for the new name is: That the name of the "Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund" be changed to "The AFMLABC Hugh Curtis British Columbia Youth Parliament Fund" and that it be commonly referred to as "The Hugh Curtis BC Youth Parliament Fund."

We hope that this focus will encourage all those who support the work done by the Association to donate generously to the fund and ensure that the grants made from the interest generated by the fund will continue long into the future.

According to the Victoria Foundation, the fund stands at \$38,215 as of March 2022, making \$1,253 available for grants this year.

Joan Barton,  
Honorary Member of the AFMLABC

---

Member survey

# We're planning the next celebration ... with your input

The pandemic has forced members of the AFMLABC to endure two years of not so splendid isolation and this year makes three. At their March Zoom meeting, the Executive decided, with much reluctance, to forego an Association fall dinner again. While they are excited about the relaxation of many COVID-19 mandates, it is impossible to predict, with any confidence, what lies ahead at the end of the summer.



The annual banquet, held for many years at Government House, takes months of planning and promotion. Just finding a speaker of prominence prepared to donate his or her time and effort is an annual challenge. Ensuring members and guests turn out in robust numbers is also a hurdle that has serious budget impacts.

To make sure the 2023 gathering is one to remember, the Executive does not want to proceed without member input. Please consider the following questions and mail your replies to: **The 2023 Gathering, P.O. Box 31009, University Heights P.O., Victoria, B.C. V8N 6J3.**

1. Should the 2023 event be held at Government House or somewhere on the Mainland that is more accessible to the majority of members? Do you have a venue in mind? Please include your place of residence (and name, if you wish).

---

---

2. When is the best time for a get together ... September as usual or perhaps in the spring, April or May?

---

---

3. Should the evening feature a full, formal, sit down dinner, as has been the case at Government House, or would a more casual hors d'oeuvre/finger food presentation be more appropriate?

---

---

4. Is a prominent speaker important? If so, any suggestions? Is there some other kind of event feature that would appeal to you?

---

---

5. The bar service at Government House has been hosted at the expense of the Association. Would a no-host bar be acceptable?

---

---