



## BC's Agricultural Land Reserve turns 50

**(Editor's note: In the 1960s and '70s, almost 6,000 hectares of prime agricultural land were lost yearly in British Columbia. It was recognized that the province lacked arable farmland, and food security was dwindling. The Land Commission Act was introduced on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1973, creating the Agricultural Land Commission. The Commission identified 4.7 million hectares to be included in the Agricultural Land Reserve. In this issue of OOTD, Joan Sawicki – NDP MLA Burnaby-Willingdon (1991-2001), Environment Minister (1999-2000) and Speaker (1992-1994) – examines BC's love/hate relationship with the ALR.)**

By Joan Sawicki

I walked into the Land Commission office in Burnaby for my first day of work in August 1973, three months after the April 18<sup>th</sup> passage of the Land Commission Act. I was greeted in a large room with a green carpet, stacks of 1:50,000 maps along the walls and little else. Ten telephones were sitting on the carpet. Most of them were ringing, with people at the other end of the lines angry at being caught in the land freeze and now unable to subdivide their land or use it for non-farm purposes.

A five-member commission had already been appointed. My soon-to-be husband, Gary Runka, a soil scientist with the BC Department of Agriculture office in Kelowna, had already been seconded to serve as general manager.

The purpose of the original Land Commission Act was clear: To preserve agricultural land for farm use and to encourage the establishment and maintenance of family farms. Our task was also clear. We were to establish Agricultural Land Reserve boundaries across the province based on agriculture land capability mapping already completed under the national Canada Land Inventory (CLI) program.

Over the decades, there has been much misinformation about what lands were included in the ALR and how the boundaries were drawn.

CLI mapping is a Class 1-7 system based on the soil/climate capability to grow a range of crops. It – and therefore the ALR – does not consider current land use (like being forested), jurisdictional status (whether private, Crown or federal lands) or economic viability (recognizing that market opportunities are ever-changing).

There have been suggestions that the line was shoddily drawn with no regard for regional agricultural differences. Nothing could be further from the truth. The process was an exhaustive one. Each regional district was asked to forward their suggested ALR boundaries based on agriculture capability maps provided. The guideline was to allow five years of expansion space to give local governments time to redirect their land use planning away from prime farmlands.

*continued on Page 4*

Her Honour

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC  
Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

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*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

This issue of OOTD reinforces the historical evidence that April is a launch pad for big things.

Former BC Speaker and cabinet minister Joan Sawicki starts our historical sojourn on Page 1 with a look back at 50 years of the ALR. I defy you to Google anything ALR and not come across Joan's imprint within minutes. Thanks, Joan, for looking back at our love/hate relationship with former Premier Dave Barrett's earth-shaking farmland preservation initiative.

In this issue – Pages 12 and 13 – BC writer Crawford Killian walks us through the Fraser River Gold Rush as chronicled by author Alexander Globe. The first wave of miners from California arrived in Victoria in April 1858. In their wake, they accelerated a precipitous decline in BC's Indigenous population. I plan to take Crawford up on his offer to share more of his writing with OOTD readers.

With the war in Ukraine into its second year and with NATO partners starting to pony up fighter jets, it seemed appropriate to look back 74 years to the birth of NATO in April 1949 (Page 16). As the Cold War raged in those days, most of us were still in short pants. I was five, and the highlight of my day back then was watching the milkman arrive on his horse-drawn cart in Montreal.

Very sad ... the passing of former MLA Al Horning. He embraced public service with purpose and dedication. Just as we were on deadline, we learned that Al was in hospital. I want to thank Kelowna Capital News Editor Jake Courtepatte for keeping me posted so we could save space on Page 10 to pay tribute to a remarkable public servant and a great guy.

# The President's Report

Sadly, one of our friends, Al Horning, who did so much work for Kelowna, our province and Canada, passed away in March. He served as an MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country from 2005 – 2009. Before that, he served as MP from 1988 – 1993 and as a city councillor from 1980 – 1988.

Al was always there to help me and everyone, regardless of the issue or the problem. I worked closely with Al for five years when he served as an MLA and after he left provincial politics. He knew everyone in Kelowna. He used his life experience as a politician and community member to guide and help everyone. Due to health issues, he did not run as an MLA in the 2009 election. I know everyone who knows him will miss him. I want to express our heartfelt condolences to all his family and friends. His contributions will always be remembered.

This month, Christians worldwide will celebrate Easter, the day Jesus rose from the dead. It is a renewal. Easter, like Vaisakhi, is held in spring – the season of new life and beginnings, a time to celebrate what has gone before and what will come. Because of my wife Isabelle's Christian background – she is of Spanish and French ancestry – I know that in the Christian faith, as with other faiths, this important day is one of bringing families together, renewing their faith, their ties and their purpose.

Similarly, in the Sikh faith, we celebrate our beginnings, future, and togetherness during Vaisakhi. This is a time to celebrate beginnings and new things – just as nature is doing right now across our great province.

Easter is a time for everyone to rejoice regardless of their faith or ethnicity. I encourage everyone to join in this celebration of the Christian religion, the many other religions, and the renewal of spring. It is a time of prayer and rejoicing for all the wonderful things that have happened and what will be coming.

I encourage everyone to reflect on their good fortune, get together with their families and friends, and make this Easter, Vaisakhi, Yom HaShoeh, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Id al-Fitr, the Birth of Buddha, Earth Day, World Autism Awareness Day, World Book Day, International Worker's Memorial Day and all other remembrances and celebrations to reflect on the past, future and a time of happiness and good wishes for the future.

If you have any suggestions, advice or just want to talk, please feel free to contact me at [daveshayer@gmail.com](mailto:daveshayer@gmail.com).



Dave Hayer,  
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# The ALR – Still here, miraculously, after 50 years

By Joan Sawicki

More than 300 public hearings were held throughout the province to allow landowner input on the proposed boundaries of the Agricultural Land Reserve that the Dave Barrett government had created in 1973.

Only then did our staff's technical work begin, reviewing every mapped inch of the boundary to make further additions or deletions. While our instructions were to include all Class 1-4 lands within the ALR, regional agricultural differences meant that some Class 5 lands (important to blueberry farmers in Richmond and forage producers in Bulkley Valley, for example) were also included. In the ranching areas of the province, some non-arable Class 6 grasslands were included based on their critical importance as spring grazing lands for the livestock industry.

Once finalized, maps were forwarded to cabinet for designation. Most regional district ALRs were designated by the end of 1975.

So, what was the rationale and justification for this unprecedented intrusion into rural land use planning? With only about five per cent of BC's land area capable of agricultural use, it was estimated we were losing 6,000 ha/year to non-farm uses. It was clear that local governments could not withstand development pressures upon this scarce provincial resource. With high reliance upon imported food from places like California and Mexico – and the increasing risks related to those sources – BC needed to safeguard its food security by ensuring our limited agricultural land was available for present and future generations.

Our first public brochure was titled *"Keeping the Options Open."* It was never envisioned that every acre of the ALR would be farmed; other compatible uses were permitted, providing they did not destroy the inherent capability of the land to grow food.

There was also a recognition that, while saving the land was critical, it would not be enough. We also needed to save the farmer and protect the integrity of rural farming communities. (One could argue we have not lived up to that part of the social contract during the first 50 years of the ALR.)

While the original act's primary focus was preserving farmland, it also included secondary objectives related to parklands, greenbelts and industrial land banks. Many Lower Mainland greenbelts were established through purchase by the land commission during these early years.



If 1973 to 1975 were "The Formative Years," the next 20 years could be labelled "The Refinement Years." While successive governments tweaked the legislation at their pleasure, none dared rescind it. As an independent commission, the ALC was left to roll with the punches while burdened with thousands of applications for further subdivision/non-farm use of farmland or outright exclusion of land from the ALR.

Some significant legislative/regulatory changes happened during this period:

- In 1977, the act was changed to delete all references to parkland, greenbelt and industrial land bank provisions and renamed the Agricultural Land Commission Act.
- That same legislative change introduced appeals of commission decisions to cabinet. It was a disaster. Putting decision-making back into the hands of politicians undermined the scientific basis of the ALR, the source of its strength and legitimacy in the eyes of the public. After several high-profile cabinet decisions, the provision was eliminated in 1993.

This was also a heyday of collaboration between the ALC and local governments across the province. It included joint fine-tuning projects (often related to updating official community plans) and planning assistance to help local governments support and protect their farming communities from the negative impacts of non-farm use.

From about the mid-1990s onward, the next 20 years of the ALR can only be called "The Uncertain Years," when the original spirit and intent of the ALR/ALC was challenged, then fuzzified, then blurred almost to destruction.

- The invoking of the hither-to unused "provincial interest" clause of the act resulted in the Six Mile Ranch case being traumatic for me. I eventually resigned from my Parliamentary Secretary position over it. Subsequent to the exclusion of 300 acres of Six Mile land outside Kamloops, the clause was amended to give clear priority to preserving agricultural land. With such a high bar, this provision has never again been used.

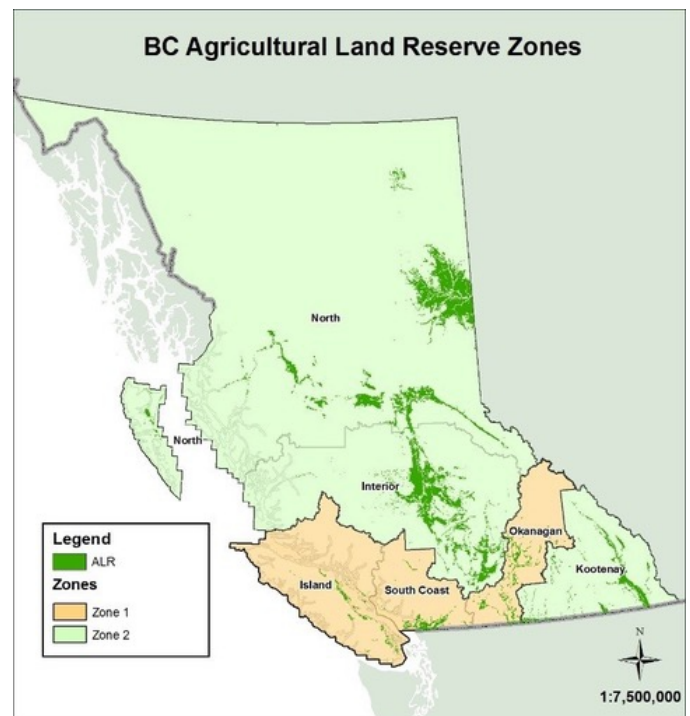
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- The 1996 Right-to-Farm Act was a positive step towards protecting farmers using standard farming practices from non-farm neighbours unhappy with such things as farmyard smells and tractor noise.
- In 2000, the legislative purpose of the ALR was 'fuzzified' when Forest Land Reserve was formally amalgamated with a subsequent renaming as the Land Reserve Commission. It was an illogical coupling as the FLR was based on tenure, and the ALR was based on science. The marriage did not last long.
- When the entity was returned as the Agricultural Land Commission in 2002, the legislative purpose was again blurred by requiring the ALC to address community needs. It was also restructured from a single provincial commission responsible for a provincial zone to six three-person regional panels. This virtually returned us to the situation that had led to the formation of the provincial zone in the first place – the fact that local or regional considerations alone could not be relied upon to protect scarce provincial agricultural lands for present and future generations of British Columbians.
- This undermining of the original spirit and intent of the ALR was further exacerbated in 2014 by dividing the ALR into two zones based on the premise that the Lower Mainland (Zone 1) was dominantly "good land" and should be subject to stricter rules while the Interior/North (Zone 2) was dominantly "poor land" and should have more flexible rules. It offended the principles of fairness, equity and consistency upon which 40 years of ALR management had been based.

This brings us to the current era, which I have temporarily labelled "The Hopeful Years."

An advisory committee on "Revitalizing the Agricultural Land Reserve and the Agricultural Land Commission" tabled its final report in December 2018. With its primary message being "agriculture first" within the ALR, subsequent legislative amendments addressed several of the committee's recommendations, including reinstating a single provincial ALR zone and re-establishing the precedence of a provincial quasi-judicial body over regional panels. However, other important recommendations remain to be dealt with.

There are new issues that were not even on the radar screen in 1973, like climate change, biodiversity and Indigenous reconciliation. All are complex and demand a much broader understanding of agricultural use beyond our



current emphasis on dominantly large-scale enterprises dedicated to planting/fertilizing/harvesting of single crops and intensive livestock. Embracing the concepts of regenerative agriculture and traditional Indigenous food systems can help us make the required shift in thinking.

However, none of this should detract from celebrating the ALR's undeniable success to date. At a time when most other jurisdictions continue to lose their food lands, BC's ALR remains the most successful agricultural land preservation program in North America. With food security now a top-of-mind public issue, thanks to the foresight demonstrated in 1973, we still have "the land" – and we would not have even our traditional agriculture sectors in the Lower Mainland or the Okanagan without the ALR.

By boldly grounding a political program on science – i.e. the inherent combination of soil, water and sunshine that is the essence of the land's productive capacity to grow ... anything – the ALR set us on the right path. It got us to here. But it will require equally good public policy and political courage in the years ahead if history is to label our current era as "The Recommitment Years" for BC's ALR.

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# Legislature cast escorts visitors on travels into history

By Nicholas Guerreiro,  
Parliamentary Player Assistant

If you visit the Parliament Buildings this summer, do not be surprised to see a man in a bowler hat taking tea in the Dining Room, a suffragist chatting with school children on the Legislative Library steps, or a crowd of eager kids chanting for the right to buy a five-cent chocolate bar.

These characters are part of the Parliamentary Players, a program that has invited young actors to “bring history to life” on the grounds of the Parliament Buildings for nearly 25 years. In recent years, this program has gone through a major renewal, and now there are more ways than ever for guests to get up close and personal with BC parliamentary history.

One of the more popular Parliamentary Player programs is the Tea and Tour. Visitors join notorious architect Francis Rattenbury for breakfast tea in the Parliamentary Dining Room and a special tour behind the scenes. Along the way, guests hear the scandalous tales of the building's construction and its architect's life. This program is especially popular with seniors and former Legislative Assembly staff, who take advantage of its relaxed pace to share stories of their time in the buildings.

In the summer, the players burst out of the buildings onto the lawns in *The Parliament Past and Present Travelling Plays*. These free half-hour theatrical adventures whisk visitors around the buildings and back in time.

Younger guests should make sure to see *My Place in Politics*, which follows a Grade 6 student who gets excited about politics after travelling back in time to 1947. There, visitors meet Laura Jamieson, the fourth woman to serve as an MLA, and get caught up in the Chocolate Bar War when 200 children stormed the Parliament Buildings demanding lower prices for candy.

Alternatively, visitors can learn about the history of the Legislative Precinct from time immemorial to today in *A House for Democracy*. Both plays are very popular. In their first summer, they were seen by more than 3,200 visitors.

Finally, if you have something spookier in mind, keep your eyes peeled in October for our haunted Halloween



*Francis Rattenbury (played by Danny Saretsky) takes tea in the Parliamentary Dining Room.*

experience, *The Life (and Death) of Francis Rattenbury*. This experience gives brave guests a chance to explore the buildings after dark. But trespassers beware – the spirits that reside in the building may make an appearance.

The Parliamentary Players program draws enthusiastic responses from visitors. Children sometimes return day after day to see their favourite actors perform. One retired stenographer was so inspired by his Tea and Tour that he dusted off his old typewriter and composed a letter of thanks.

The next time you are in Victoria and see a spooky speaker telling ghost stories or hear an old-fashioned figure giving a speech, listen in. It is probably one of the Parliamentary Players.

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Above: The cast of the *Parliament Past and Present Travelling Plays* (from left Syrah Khan, Sheldon Parathundiyil, Ryan Kniel, Sara Gargaro, Naomi Duska, and Isabella Derilo) pose in front of the Legislative Assembly.

Right: A host of parliamentary ghosts (from left Nicholas Guerreiro, Isabella Derilo, Sheldon Parathundiyil) answer questions in the haunted reading room of the Legislative Library.



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# Debate volleys over Canada's three health care mindsets

A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians divided about universal health care and privatization efforts.

After years of challenges and little sign of abatement, Canadians are clearly worried about health care. The road to fixing Canada's health care system may be a long one, but many are hoping for improvement as a much-anticipated \$46-billion funding deal from the federal government was agreed upon by the provinces and territories.

Still, it may only be a start. Premiers are asking for regular reviews of health care funding and say the new money is not enough to address all of the needs of their health care systems.

All provinces are finalizing individual bilateral agreements with the federal government to receive their additional health transfers. As this unfolds, provinces continue to explore privately-delivered publicly-funded health care leading some to question where this new funding will go.

Private care already exists in Canada in many forms. In BC, a person can pay outside the public system for an MRI, CT scan, or ultrasound. In Ontario, the government has introduced plans to offload more public care into the existing private marketplace – though the Ontario Health Insurance Plan would cover procedures eligible for this transfer.

Notably, in one of the earliest cases of private clinics being allowed to perform surgeries covered by the public health system, Quebec lifted the ban on private health insurance for total hip replacement, knee replacement and cataracts in the wake of the 2005 Supreme Court case *Chaoulli v. Quebec*.

Debates about health care in Canada tend to volley back and forth between privatization and public care – one side or the other. Broadly speaking, there are three groups in Canada when it comes to views of health care and privatization: Those who are staunch supporters of current public universal care – the **Public Health Purists**; those who are enthusiastically supportive of privatization efforts – the **Private Care Proponents**; and, those who see value in both sides of the debate – the **Curious but Hesitant**.

All three mindsets are found across age, gender, income, education and political demographics. That said, each mindset is home to unique characteristics:



## Public Health Purists

- 49 per cent of women aged 55 years and older are in this category
- Two-thirds of past NDP voters (68 per cent) and half of past Liberal voters are Purists
- Perhaps in response to recent developments in Ontario, residents there are most likely to be Purists relative to any other region or province in the country (47 per cent)
- Half of those with a university education are Public Health Purists

## Private Care Proponents

- Men of all ages more are likely to be Private Care Proponents, including 35 per cent of men 35 to 54
- Half of past Conservative voters are Private Care Proponents
- Most likely to be found in Saskatchewan (40 per cent) and Alberta (36 per cent)
- Tend to be higher income: 41 per cent living in households earning \$200K+ are in this group
- Evenly distributed across all education levels

## Curious but Hesitant

- At least 28 per cent of each age and gender demographic
- 45 per cent of women 18 to 34 are Curious but Hesitant
- At least one-quarter of all past supporters of Canada's major political parties
- Most likely to be found in Quebec (45 per cent) – perhaps because of the province's early dabbling in private care post *Chaoulli v. Quebec*
- Tend to be lower income: 40 per cent of Canadians in households earning less than \$50K are in this group
- More likely to have high school education or less (38 per cent)

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The Canadians who championed universal public health care, Tommy Douglas, Lester B. Pearson, Woodrow Lloyd, and others, are fondly remembered for the legacy they helped to establish. But the picture in Canada is changing as the health care crisis persists.

Since the landmark *Chaoulli v. Quebec* Supreme Court decision in 2005, Canadian provinces have begun tapping the private system to provide health care services historically offered by the public system. Ontario is the latest province to allow private clinics to perform surgeries. Premier Doug Ford's government believes private clinics can help combat the lengthy waitlists that are a legacy of the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic. Critics, including the opposition Ontario NDP, have raised the alarm, warning the province is on a path to a two-tiered, "American-style model" health care system, prioritizing care for the rich at the expense of poor Ontarians.

There is no consensus from Canadians that a shift in approach would help the current conditions. Overall, close to half say that more private care will only worsen the situation. More than one-in-three feel that increased private delivery will help. Those who are proponents of either public or private care lean heavily to their own side of the debate on this question, while the Curious but Hesitant are most likely to be uncertain.

As wait times continue to increase, Canadians are seeking private care for operations like knee and hip replacements. While the price tag can be in the tens of thousands of dollars, the juice is evidently worth the squeeze for some. While this band of care already exists in Canada, debate over its expansion continues to occupy many political leaders, advocates, and policymakers.

Canadians are divided. More than 43 per cent say that allowing patients to pay out of pocket for faster access to some surgeries is fine with them, while slightly more oppose this (47 per cent). Notably, however, this idea is supported at higher levels than opposed in every region other than Ontario.

Public Health Purists are heavily against paying to step out of the public queue, while Private Care Proponents near-unanimously support it. The Curious are, true to form, open to the idea, but only so much.

For some, there is a time aspect to this debate. Two-in-five (40 per cent), the largest group, say that they support expanding private care in the short term only to clear the

backlog of surgeries and tests. Just 38 per cent say this is fine either in the long term or in both the short and long term, while one-in-five (22 per cent), including half of Public Health Purists (48 per cent), say this is inappropriate at all times.

There appear to be two significant causes of consternation for those who either oppose privatization or are on the fence about it: Access for low-income individuals and the potential exacerbation of already considerable challenges surrounding staffing shortages.

At least 62 per cent in every region say they worry about access for lower-income Canadians, and 71 per cent say this overall. A similar number are worried that expanding private care will only worsen staffing shortages, which have plagued the country's health care system in recent years.

Herein lies the root of the "Hesitant" in the group named Curious but Hesitant. While they generally support private solutions more than the Public Health Purists, they are far more worried about the potential consequences of that transition than Private Care Proponents.



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# The “Al Horning Way” celebrated at Kelowna City Hall

Al Horning – a long-time Rutland champion, former Kelowna city councillor, Kelowna-Lake Country MLA and Okanagan MP – died in March at 83.

His death came about six weeks after a ceremony in council chambers on Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> when Kelowna Mayor Tom Dyas and council honoured Al, announcing that a road connecting the airport and Rutland would be named “Al Horning Way.”

“He set the course for the airport to become one of the top 10 busiest airports in Canada,” Dyas said. “When the runway was extended by 2,000 feet in 1990, it became the longest in the interior and was instrumental in bringing air carriers such as WestJet to YLW.”

Al made light of the honour: “As far as Al Horning Way is concerned, I thought they only named roads after hockey players.”

March 21<sup>st</sup>, Mayor Dyas issued this statement: “Kelowna City Council and staff join with so many people in our community who knew Al Horning in expressing sincere condolences to his family and many friends.

“It goes without saying that our community is a better place because of Al Horning. His many years of public service in three levels of government and at the grassroots level produced benefits for generations of Kelowna residents and businesses.

“He motivated improvements in Kelowna, helping us grow from humble agricultural beginnings to an increasingly sophisticated economy and diverse society. In terms of his approach to being a city councillor, he once told the *Daily Courier*: ‘I never wanted council to get in the way of people who wanted to do something.’

“Al Horning was someone who got things done – whether it was fighting to get bigger planes into Kelowna or getting federal contracts for Kelowna companies like Western Star or getting ball diamonds built – he always brought dogged determination to his work. He represented the epitome of community service.”

Horning was born in 1939 in Saskatchewan, and his family first came to Kelowna on vacation in 1944. He grew up in Rutland and started working at the Rutland sawmill at age 16. He became a city councillor in 1980, serving four, two-year terms. In 1988, he was elected MP for



*In early February, former city councillor and Okanagan MLA and MP, Al Horning, was honoured by Kelowna Mayor Tom Dyas and council. (Photo/Wayne Moore)*

Okanagan Centre under the Progressive Conservative banner. After losses in the 1993 and 1997 federal elections, he returned to city council in 2002. Horning was then elected MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country in 2005, representing the BC Liberals.

He continued working on YLW expansion and recreation and business development in Kelowna, touching many parts of the city during his career. He retired from politics in 2009, but not from serving his community.

Horning was a champion snowmobile racer and founding member of the Kelowna Snowmobile Association. His summers were usually spent on the ball diamonds. He and other baseball players built King Stadium with volunteer labour after convincing the city to provide them with the land.

For these and other contributions to sport in Kelowna, Horning was inducted into the Central Okanagan Sports Hall of Fame in 2021. He credited his late wife of nearly 60 years, Donna, for supporting his work in business, politics, and sport throughout their lives together, including raising their children Robert, Bradley and Sandra.

“Al Horning is the epitome of a community builder,” added Dyas.

To honour Al's many years of service to the community, the city's flags flew at half-mast for several days.

# Memories fit for a king are as fresh as ever

By Penny Priddy

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1998, Prince Charles came to Vancouver with his two children William, age 15 and Harry age 13. This would be Charles' 18<sup>th</sup> visit to Canada and his sixth visit to BC.

Princess Diana had died only months earlier. They were on their way to Whistler for a skiing holiday. One of the stops Charles made was at St. Vincent's Langara Seniors Residence. As the Minister of Health at the time, I was asked to greet the Prince and accompany him during his tour.

A large crowd was gathered, waiting for the limousine to arrive. As the many limousines pulled up, loud cheering began and intensified as the passengers exited the cars. There were two kinds of cheering occurring: One was the kind that you might expect for a member of the Royal Family, and the other was far more frenzied, more like you might expect to hear at a rock concert.

The crowd was partially made up of screaming teenage girls. Clearly, "Will's Mania" had begun. A group of girls, some of whom had been given permission by their parents to miss school that day, others probably not, were following Prince Charles and his sons to every event that was accessible to the public.

Considerable thought and preparation had been given by St. Vincent's to the format of the visit, and they were honoured that the Prince had chosen to visit them. There were decorations and photographs of the Royal Family on many of the walls and doors throughout the building.

As we began the tour, Charles was introduced to the residents individually. The residents had given much thought to this occasion. The women were wearing their best dresses, and the men had on shirts, ties and jackets and were wearing their war medals with pride. These were men who had served in the First and Second World Wars. Some had served under Lord Mountbatten, with whom Charles had a special relationship until Mountbatten's tragic assassination in 1979.

Almost everyone had a small treasure related to the Royal Family to show the Prince. Sometimes it was a medal, a note from a member of The Royal Family or an invitation to a garden party at the palace. Charles reviewed each item with graciousness and respect as he listened carefully to the stories behind these treasures.

It is said that institutions learn by study, and people learn by stories. That being the case, much learning occurred that day, and I was privileged to be part of it.

This coming May 6<sup>th</sup>, I will watch the coronation of King Charles III – as I watched his mother's coronation almost 70 years earlier on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1953 – and my memory of meeting him will be as fresh as ever.



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# Fraser River Gold Rush ... an expensive adventure

(Editor's Note: The first wave of miners from California arrived at Victoria en route to the Fraser River Gold Rush in April 1858. Even though it politically unified British Columbia, the Gold Rush caused a precipitous decline in the Indigenous population. In *The Tyee*, BC wordsmith Crawford Killian shared his review of *Gold, Grit, Guns: Miners on BC's Fraser River in 1858* by Alexander Globe.)

By Crawford Killian

*Gold, Grit, Guns* is an extraordinary book that focuses on the lives of four prospectors and their mixed fortunes in the BC Gold Rush of 1858. Their diaries vividly describe the expense and hard work it took just to reach an unclaimed gravel bar and then to find the flakes and nuggets of gold it might contain. In the process of getting rich, or more likely going broke, they also began the breaking of an ecosystem and an economy thousands of years old.

The year 1858 was pivotal for the western regions of British North America. It saw the transformation of "New Caledonia" into the Crown colony of British Columbia (soon to merge with the colony of Vancouver Island). It saw the end of Hudson's Bay Company rule and the start of more or less responsible government. And, of course, it saw the comings and goings of thousands of foreigners, whether they were gold prospectors or those seeking profits by selling goods to the prospectors.

The onset of a new economy, imported by thousands of outsiders, collided with a much older economy of Indigenous trade routes that extended thousands of kilometres from the coast. The Hudson's Bay Company had not so much taken over the old Indigenous networks as plugged itself into them. James Douglas, as a very effective Black and Scottish trader who ran the HBC in the Pacific Northwest, seems to have understood and respected his Indigenous trading partners and generally maintained good relations with them.

But, he could see trouble coming. By 1858, the HBC was on its way out as the ruling power. Gold had been found in BC rivers, and many Indigenous peoples were mining it as a new source of revenue. Eventually, the news reached California, where the 1849 gold rush was fading. Douglas knew he would soon be swamped by American adventurers. They had recently taken over two-thirds of Mexico, and Douglas reasoned that the Americans might well want BC up to the southern boundary of Russian America.

When the first prospectors arrived in April 1858, the shock was immediate. The Americans considered Victoria a sleepy village populated by HBC clerks; suddenly, it was crammed with real-estate speculators, merchants, and hungry young men eager to get across to the mainland and up the Fraser. Everything was exorbitantly expensive.



Alexander Globe is very good on the economics: The cost of passage to Victoria from San Francisco was \$25 to \$60 at a time when a typical year's wages was \$300. From New York via Panama, a first-class ticket was \$300 to \$600; steerage was \$150. Travelling from Victoria across the Salish Sea and up the Fraser was expensive, too, from the mining permit (\$5 a month, often ignored) to the two-day steamer trip to Fort Hope (\$40 to \$60). Supplies for four men over six months (everything from shovels to brandy) cost \$160, not counting transportation.

Globe builds the core of his book around three Americans and a Canadian whose diaries have survived.

George Slocumb, son of an Illinois judge, had failed in the California gold rush. On his way north, he overspent on travel and lodgings, then paused for a month in Port Townsend, Washington Territory, where he was amazed by "the amount of ignorance displayed on all occasions by the settlers ... rude and ungentlemanly to strangers."

Hearing reports of violence between white people and Indigenous people, Slocumb sided with the whites: "The Governor is an old foggy ... says foreigners coming into the country and making war with the Indians are traitors to the country. The protection guaranteed by the mining tax is all humbug. There is not a soldier in the mines, and the miners are doing their own fighting and doing it well."

After six months, Slocumb finally reached the mines but was unable to stake a claim and lacked the money to buy one. Returning to California in November, he hired himself out to mining companies for day wages. After a trip back home to Illinois (and a shotgun marriage), he went back to San Francisco and a career speculating in mining stocks.

*continued next page*

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George Beam, living on Whidbey Island in Washington Territory, slipped across the border without paying for a mining permit and, before long, was working a claim near Fort Yale. Globe praises Beam's diary as the most detailed surviving account of how gold miners operated in the early months of the gold rush.

Beam and his mining partners obtained mercury to catch the fine gold in their sluices but got sick from the vapour when they boiled the mercury off. Still, he sold his claim in November 1858 and went home with a \$1,000 profit. He served in the Washington Territorial legislature in 1863 and 1864 and died of tuberculosis in 1866, aged 34.

Otis Parsons took part in James Douglas's first great infrastructure project, turning an Indigenous trail into a wagon road that would avoid the worst stretches of the Fraser River. Roadbuilding alternated between backbreaking toil and idleness as the workers waited for the colonial government to round up more mules (\$200 each) to carry food and other supplies to the men. Local Indigenous peoples resisted the roadbuilding, knowing it would bring yet more white people into their land. Many workers returned to the Fraser for the winter; out of the "five or six hundred" who stayed north of Lytton, many died from "lack of good shelter, scurvy, and starvation."

Parsons, however, returned to Victoria and stocked up on miners' supplies, which he sold in several locations on the road and elsewhere. After over a decade as a packer and trader, he spent the early 1870s running steamers up and down the Fraser. In 1875, aged 45, he retired and left for California with his wife and infant daughter, sailing on the steamer Pacific. It struck another ship and went down, taking the Parsons family with it.

The anonymous Canadian is the most intriguing of the gold-rush diarists. We have his diary and even his photograph as a confident young man. The diary eventually reached a friend or relative in Gananoque, Ontario, who added some entries and mentioned that the anonymous young man had drowned in 1859.

The man had likely done well in California before arriving early in the BC Gold Rush. The Indigenous people he met recognized him as a "King George man" who treated them with respect. He also got along with the overwhelmed colonial officers trying to maintain order on the Fraser and even worked a claim with one.

Despite a foot injury, the Canadian began making money from a claim, and in October, he sold his claim for \$400, having earned the impressive total of \$1,115 since the

summer. Sometime in the next few years, according to an almost illegible note in the diary added years later, he drowned in Cariboo country.

Globe blends the diarists' texts into his own, giving them context. As we learn about their struggles, successes, and failures, we see them in detail while also seeing how they and thousands more transformed the landscape.

"On the Fraser River," Globe tells us, "beads of mercury can be found by digging a few feet into Emory's Bar, south of Yale." He also describes how the sheer volume of soil and rock washed into the Fraser changed its bed, making it unpredictably shallow in some places and deep in others.

The destruction of the summer run of salmon in 1858 was thanks to the mud discharged into the Fraser and its tributaries, wiping out a reliable Indigenous food source. Continued mining permanently ruined many spawning grounds in later years, making some Indigenous peoples dependent on government food supplies.

They also faced pressure from incoming white people who intended to stay. Reserves for the Indigenous peoples were inevitable, but Globe says Douglas wanted reserves large enough to sustain both farming and traditional Indigenous ways of gathering food: "Douglas proposed leasing unoccupied portions, with the proceeds applied to the exclusive benefit of the Indians, including the building of schools that would prepare them for lives integrated with white settlers." These would enable Indigenous children to learn within the context of their own ways of life.

It was not to be. In 1864, as Douglas was about to step down as governor, an Englishman named Joseph William Trutch was appointed chief commissioner for lands and works. As Globe describes it: "Shortly after Douglas resigned, Trutch swept aside treaty agreements made with Indigenous people as mere 'verbal instructions.' That falsehood was given to justify his reduction of Douglas's reserves by 92 per cent, thus freeing 40,000 acres for white possession."

So, within six years of the start of the gold rush, BC's greatest river and its ecosystem had been transformed, and the people who had lived on their lands for thousands of years had been displaced and effectively imprisoned on tiny reserves run by white "Indian agents."

Once, they had been self-sufficient, trading goods along thousands of kilometres of trails. Now they lived largely on government rations. The residential schools were on their way, and so were a century and a half of social, political, and environmental problems that we have still failed to solve.

# BC Hydro finds COVID-19 changed our daily habits

It has been more than three years since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. Through the spring of 2020, stay-at-home measures designed to slow the spread of COVID-19 resulted in many British Columbians spending more time at home and adjusting to new daily routines.

At the start of the pandemic, BC Hydro saw an initial increase in residential electricity use in mid-March 2020 when stay-at-home measures were put in place, but by May 2020, things had returned to near-predicted levels for the time of year. However, BC Hydro data at the time showed that new routines had emerged, leading to a significant shift in how British Columbians used electricity.

From staying up late and sleeping in to cooking more and showering less, many British Columbians made significant changes to their daily routines during the height of the pandemic. New BC Hydro data reveals that some of the shifts in residential electricity use have become the norm for many British Columbians.

When the pandemic began, data showed weekday electricity use peaking later in the morning and earlier in the evening, more closely resembling typical weekend patterns. Although this trend rebounded slightly in the late summer and early fall of 2020 when stay-at-home measures were lifted, and many went back to work in offices or on a job site, current data still shows a slight shift like spring 2020.

Much like in 2020, a recent survey conducted on behalf of BC Hydro shows this shift can be explained by some British Columbians permanently changing their daily routines because of societal changes such as remote work.

Most British Columbians (75 per cent) said their weekday routine remains changed from pre-pandemic, and 62 per cent said their weekend routine remains changed. Most said what remains changed is their home routine (53 per cent), work routine (51 per cent), or school routine (13 per cent).

Most of those who worked from home at least one day a week during the pandemic still do, and this might be why some are still sleeping in (26 per cent) and going to bed later (19 per cent) on weekdays. For both those sleeping in and waking up later, most are doing so by about one full hour to an hour and a half.

For those sleeping in on weekdays, the main reason is working from home and not having a commute (49 per cent), followed by a change in routine (39 per cent), going to sleep later at night (38 per cent), having become more relaxed since the pandemic (34 per cent) and not needing as much time as they used to for grooming in the morning. Speaking of which, 15 per cent said they are showering less often in the morning and for shorter periods of time than they used to on pre-pandemic weekdays.

For many, being home more on weekdays at the height of the pandemic changed the frequency and timing of cooking and chores, which still holds true. At the beginning of the pandemic, most restaurants were temporarily closed or offering limited takeout options, leading many British Columbians to cook more at home. Many also tried baking bread or desserts to pass the time.

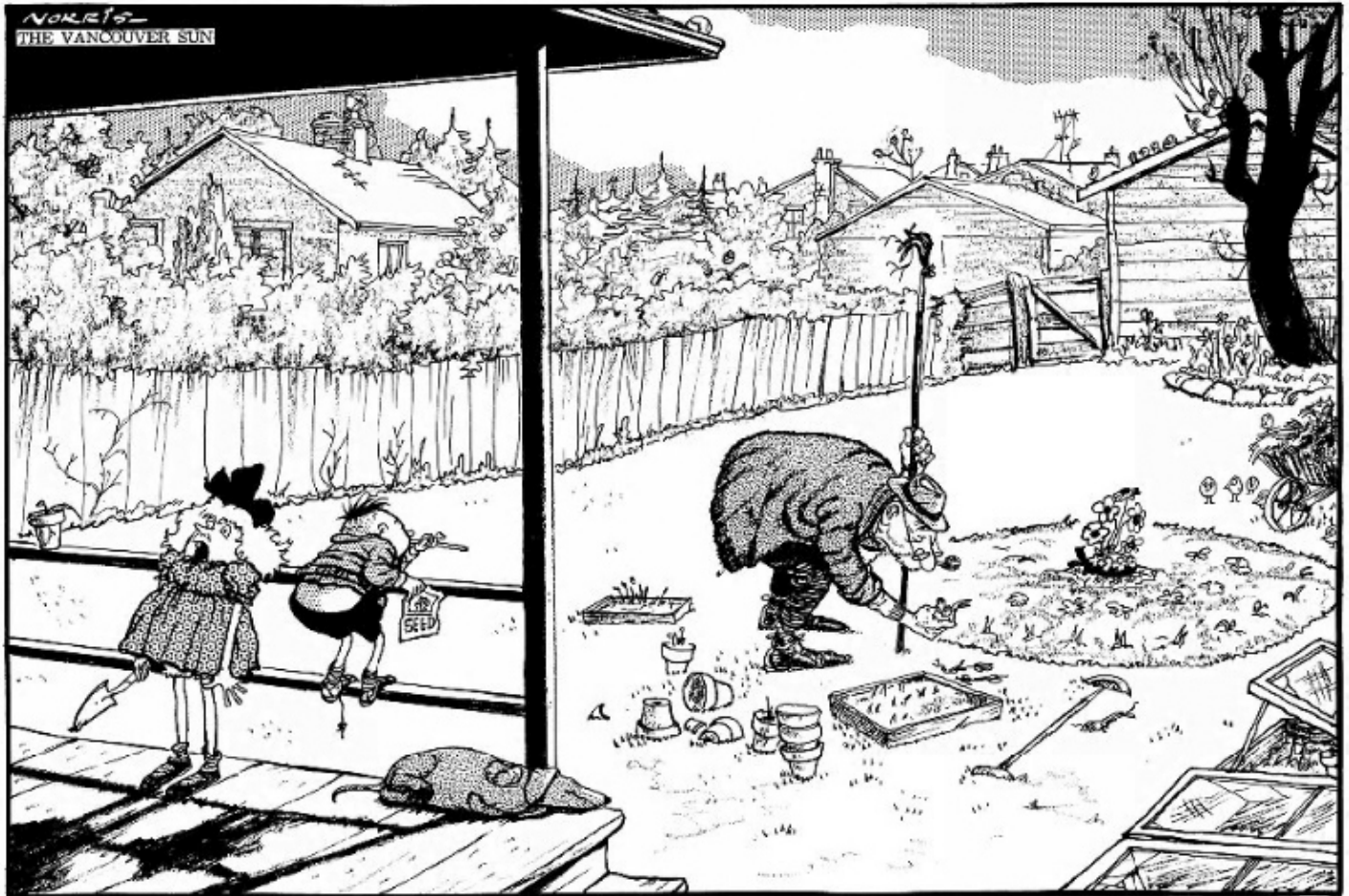
Baking is a pandemic pastime many have kept: 25 per cent are still baking more often than pre-pandemic. Meals at home have also shifted: To this day, when it comes to breakfast, 28 per cent of British Columbians said they are making it more at home now than they did pre-pandemic, and 34 per cent are skipping the Starbucks and making coffee more at home too. There are similar results for dinner: 33 per cent are still cooking dinner at home more often and earlier than they did pre-pandemic, which could explain some of the electricity use shifts, such as earlier evening electricity peaks.

- BC Hydro

**Comparing habits then vs. now**

COVID Impact	Then (September 2020)	Now (February 2023)
Sleeping in on weekdays	12%	26%
Making coffee at home more	20%	34%
Making breakfast at home more	16%	28%
Showering less	14%	15%
Cooking dinner more	26%	33%
Baking more	20%	25%
Ordering takeout more	27%	27%
Watching/streaming more TV and movies	29%	56%

# Len Norris



*"Ma ... I think Grandpa's just planted your new Easter hat ... "*

## Please support BC Youth Parliament

The Association of Former MLAs of BC seeks your support for BC Youth Parliament and its annual session in Victoria. Donations can be made to the "AFMLABC Hugh Curtis British Columbia Youth Parliament Fund," which is managed by the Victoria Foundation.

By phone: Call 250-381-5532 to make a donation by credit card directly.

By cheque: To the Victoria Foundation, #200 - 703 Broughton Street, Victoria, B.C., V8N 1E2.

**Make your cheque payable to The Victoria Foundation.** Note the name of the fund in the cheque memo line or in a cover letter.

Online: Go to [www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca](http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca). Click on "Giving" in the navigation bar and then on "Make a Donation." After that just follow the prompts to find the AFMLABC Hugh Curtis BC Youth Parliament Fund.

If you have any questions about how to make a donation to the Victoria Foundation, please contact Sara Neely, Director of Philanthropic Services, at 250-381-5532 or [sneely@victoriafoundation.bc.ca](mailto:sneely@victoriafoundation.bc.ca).

April 4, 1949

# Soviet Cold War expansion gives birth to NATO

In 1949, the prospect of further Communist expansion prompted the United States and 11 other Western nations to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The Soviet Union and its affiliated Communist nations in Eastern Europe founded a rival alliance, the Warsaw Pact, in 1955. The alignment of nearly every European nation into one of the two opposing camps formalized the political division of the European continent that had taken place since the Second World War. This alignment provided the framework for the military standoff that continued throughout the Cold War (1945 to 1991).

Conflict between the Western nations (including the United States, Great Britain, France and other countries) and the Communist Eastern bloc (led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or USSR) began almost as soon as the guns fell silent at the end of the Second World War.

The USSR oversaw the installation of pro-Soviet governments in many of the areas it had taken from the Nazis during the war. In response, the U.S. and its Western allies sought ways to prevent further expansion of Communist influence on the European continent. In 1947, U.S. leaders introduced the Marshall Plan, a diplomatic initiative that provided aid to friendly nations to help them rebuild their war-damaged infrastructures and economies.

Events of the following year prompted American leaders to adopt a more militaristic stance toward the Soviets. In February 1948, a coup sponsored by the Soviet Union overthrew the democratic government of Czechoslovakia and brought that nation firmly into the Communist camp.

Within a few days, U.S. leaders agreed to join discussions aimed at forming a joint security agreement with their European allies. The process gained new urgency in June of that year when the USSR cut off ground access to Berlin, forcing the U.S., Britain and France to airlift supplies to their sectors of the German city, which had been partitioned between the Western Allies and the Soviets following the Second World War.

The discussions between the Western nations concluded on April 4, 1949, when the foreign ministers of 12 countries in North America and Western Europe gathered in Washington, D.C., to sign the North Atlantic Treaty. It was primarily a security pact, with Article 5 stating that a military attack against any signatories would be considered an attack against them all.



*Nato is formed in response to the prospect of Communist expansion.*

When U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson (1893 to 1971) put his signature on the document, it reflected a significant change in American foreign policy. For the first time since the 1700s, the U.S. had formally tied its security to that of nations in Europe – the continent that had served as the flash point for both world wars.

The original membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) consisted of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United States. NATO formed the backbone of the West's military bulwark against the USSR and its allies for the next 40 years, with its membership growing larger throughout the Cold War era. Greece and Turkey were admitted in 1952, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1955, and Spain in 1982. Unhappy with its role in the organization, France withdrew from military participation in NATO in 1966 and did not return until 1995.

The Warsaw Pact was, in some ways, a response to the creation of NATO, although it did not occur until six years after the Western alliance came into being. It was more directly inspired by the rearming of West Germany and its admission into NATO in 1955. In the aftermath of the First World War and Second World War, Soviet leaders felt very apprehensive about Germany once again becoming a military power – a concern that was shared by many European nations on both sides of the Cold War divide.

**Source: History.com**