

## Vimy Ridge bears witness to “the birth of a nation”

One hundred years ago this month Brigadier-General Alexander Ross commanded the 28th (North-West) Battalion at Vimy Ridge. Later, as president of the Canadian Legion, he proposed the first veterans' post-war pilgrimage to the new Vimy Memorial in 1936.

He said of the battle: "It was Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific on parade. I thought then ... that in those few minutes I witnessed the birth of a nation."

In this edition of OOTD we pause, with Jim Hume (P-15), to reflect on the sacrifices that defined that epic battle.



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**Her Honour**

**The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC**

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

# Thank You and Miscellany

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

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

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

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

## From the Editor's Desk

Elections are a time of renewal and the May vote in BC will be no different.

By my count, 14 MLAs have opted to retire ahead of the vote. They include: NDPers Robin Austin (Skeena), Kathy Corrigan (Burnaby-Deer Lake), Sue Hammell (Surrey-Green Timbers), Maurine Karagianis (Esquimalt-Royal Roads), Norm Macdonald (Columbia River-Revelstoke), Bill Routley (Cowichan Valley) and Jane Shin (Burnaby-Lougheed); Liberals Bill Bennett (Kootenay East), Gordon Hogg (Surrey-White Rock), Terry Lake (Kamloops-North Thompson), Don McRae (Comox Valley) and Moira Stilwell (Vancouver-Langara); and, Independents Pat Pimm (Peace River North) and Vicki Huntington (Delta South).

I'm sure many of them are leaving the political stage with mixed feelings. Maurine Karagianis said it well: "I'm pretty sure I'll have some days where it's like, 'Damn, I think I made the wrong decision.'" However, she added: "Any political party needs renewal. There's a natural kind of rhythm to moving on and letting new voices and new ideas come into the party."

And, Gordon Hogg summed up the experience this way: "Even though my career as an MLA has spanned almost two decades, I continue to be humbled and honoured as a representative of a democratic society. This honour is reinforced for me each time that I walk up the steps of our Legislature."

The directors of the Association of Former MLAs of BC may be forgiven if they are approaching the May provincial election with a sense of enlightened self-interest. Why? Simple: The Legislature's willingly unemployed – and some who will join their ranks after May 9th – are all potential new members of the AFMLABC.

Let's make sure we recruit these potential new members in the weeks ahead and make them welcome.

In this issue of OOTD, three former MLAs share some fond memories from the hustings; we review the most recent redistribution that increased the Legislature seats by two; and, we take a look at the great work being done by Elections BC to engage our young people in the democratic life of this province.

# 2017 Association Dues

It's that time again. Dues for 2017 are due.

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

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

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*A message from the President*

## Pollster Angus Reid is AFMLABC’s 2017 guest speaker

I am delighted to let everyone know that the Association of Former MLAs of BC 30th anniversary dinner will welcome Canada’s best-known pollster, Dr. Angus Reid, as its guest speaker.



The annual dinner will take place Friday, September 22nd, 2017 at Government House in Victoria. Please put a note in your calendar and hold the date. I have a feeling dinner tickets will go quickly this year particularly because it is our 30th anniversary and because we were forced to cancel the 2016 dinner.

Angus Reid, who is chair of the Angus Reid Institute, has spent more than four decades asking people what they think and feel about top social, governance and economic issues. From 1979 to 2001, he was founder and CEO of Angus Reid Group which grew into the largest research firm in Canada. It was sold to Ipsos SA in 2000. From 2004 to 2013, Angus was CEO of the online panel company Vision Critical.

Angus has written numerous columns on economic, social and governance issues as well as the best-seller “Shakedown: How the New Economy is Changing our Lives.” He is the recipient of a Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship, the Entrepreneur of the Year award and was inducted into the Marketing Hall of Legends in 2010.

I’m also pleased to report that the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund, managed for us by the wonderful team at the Victoria Foundation, has topped the \$17,000 mark.

Grants from the memorial fund acknowledge Hugh’s long-standing interest in youth and his commitment to the British Columbia Youth Parliament. The Fund provides opportunities for wider participation in the Youth Parliament’s annual sessions in the Parliament Buildings by helping to defray travel and accommodation expenses for two youth who live outside the Greater Victoria area. For information on how to contribute go to Page 13 in this issue of Orders of the Day.

~ Penny Priddy



# Parliament Buildings prepare for 175,000-plus visitors

by Nicolas Rodger  
Parliamentary Tour Officer

Between May 1st and September 5th, 2016, more than 175,500 guests visited the Parliament Buildings with 61,440 of them on one of our 1,893 tours. If this trend continues this year, we expect that our seven Parliamentary Tour Guides and four Parliamentary Players will host an increased number of visitors from across BC and the four corners of the globe.

This year's student Tour Guides and Parliamentary Players come to the Parliamentary Education Office from wide-ranging universities and colleges ... the Universities of Geneva, Victoria and Ottawa to the Canadian College of Performing Arts.

Their educational backgrounds are globally diverse including Art History, French, Italian, German Literature, Performing Arts and Theatre. They are all bilingual and many are trilingual and, together, speak five different languages: English, French, German, Italian and Korean.



Visitors will meet the embodiment of BC's first female MLA Mary Ellen Smith and famous Parliament Buildings architect Francis Rattenbury as they stroll on the front driveway

The 2017 Summer Program starts with a comprehensive two-week training period at the beginning of May and continues until Labour Day. During this period, through guided tours and historical interpretation, they will share the history of this great province, help visitors enjoy the architectural splendor of our cherished heritage building and teach visitors about British Columbia's parliamentary process.

The Parliamentary Players program gives theatre students the opportunity to shine a light on historical characters and events that helped to shape and define BC. Dressed in period costumes, these student actors appear on tours and deliver lively monologues and themed vignettes.

The Players also interact with visitors along the front driveways and lawns each day throughout the busy summer months. This summer, our driveways will be graced by the appearance of Her Majesty Queen Victoria; the architect of our fine buildings, Francis Mawson Rattenbury; the longest serving MLA in BC, Thomas Uphill; BC's first female MLA Mary Ellen Smith; and, BC's second Premier, Amor De Cosmos.

It will be a pleasure for us to host you and your guests on one of our regularly scheduled public tours (May 20th – September 4th, 2017, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – seven days a week) or to help you book a private tour online at ([www.leg.bc.ca/tours](http://www.leg.bc.ca/tours)). Our Parliamentary Gift Shop will also be open throughout the summer offering a wide variety of BC souvenirs, products and edibles.



Tour guide Leah shares a summer moment with a historical ghost, BC's longest serving MLA Thomas Uphill

# Think big picture; student votes really do count

Every election there is a common complaint; attracting young voters to the polls is like pulling teeth.

In the 2013 BC general election, only 48 per cent of registered voters 18 to 24 cast ballots. And, an anemic 40 per cent of voters 25 to 34 got off the couch. The overall turnout was a lacklustre 55 per cent of BC's 3.2 million eligible voters. More than 74 per cent of energetic voters 65 to 74 went to the polls.

This spring, for the fourth time, Elections BC has partnered with CIVIX to deliver the Student Vote program. Even though citizens must be at least 18 years old to vote, the folks at Elections BC are convinced that engaging students before they can legally mark an X on the ballot will pay democratic dividends down the road. CIVIX is a non-partisan, national charity building the skills and habits of citizenship among young Canadians. Its vision is a strong and inclusive Canada where all young people are ready, willing and able to contribute to their country.

Student Vote is a non-partisan, parallel election program for students under the voting age. The program provides students with an opportunity to experience their democracy first-hand and, hopefully, develop a habit of voting that will endure.



Students count ballots

Registered schools receive a free election package that includes activity guides, posters, electoral district maps, ballot boxes, voting screens and ballots. On the day before the “adult” May 9th vote, schools host a Student Vote Day. Students take on the roles of voting officials and organize a parallel vote using the materials provided.



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Identical to the official election process, students have the opportunity to vote on local candidates in their electoral district, and are encouraged to learn about party platforms, local candidates, and foster dialogue among students and their families.

In 2013, the program was delivered to elementary, middle and high schools throughout BC. It was the most successful to date with 766 schools registered and more than 100,000 students participating.

The Student Vote results (NDP - 38 per cent, Liberals - 28, Greens - 17, Conservatives - 8) were announced following the close of voting on May 14, and published in newspapers the following day.

As a companion piece to this initiative Elections BC has embarked on a program called "Youth at the Booth." It is actually hiring high school students to work as election officials. Students who participate in the Youth at the Booth program will work a full day as an election official at a voting place in their community. Students will gain experience to put towards graduation requirements, enhance their resume, and put on post-secondary applications, while also learning about elections and voting.

This month, BC's Chief Electoral Officer Keith Archer is speaking at high schools and post-secondary campuses across BC and registration drives are being held at every post-secondary campus in the province. In order to make voting accessible to students, some voting places will be set up on post-secondary campuses. Other speaking engagements include First Nations organizations and organizations that service individuals with disabilities.

Underpinning all this outreach is "Democracy Bootcamp" an Elections BC/CIVIX initiative that equips teachers with the resources they need to encourage democratic engagement and civic participation amongst their students. Teachers from across the province attended a Democracy Bootcamp in Vancouver in February.

Finally, in Vancouver, Check Your Head (CYH) is a youth-driven charitable non-profit organization that provides education, resources, training and support for youth. In partnership with Elections BC, CYH is hosting an interactive public art display in downtown Vancouver. The art display will be staffed by youth who will provide information about registration and voting.



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# Campaigns of yesteryear

## Saving the Stanley was on everyone's ticket

By Tom Perry  
Vancouver-Point Grey, 1989-1991  
Vancouver-Little Mountain, 1991-1996

In September 1991, the Stanley Theatre on Granville Street in Vancouver was to be demolished by Famous Players. Named after Governor General Lord Stanley, the theatre opened in 1930 and was, by 1991, Vancouver's oldest cinema.

A developer wanted to convert the site into a "mini-mall." Strong negative public reaction began to build when Famous Players announced the Stanley's swan song, a nostalgic repeat of "Fantasia." Heritage Vancouver members were urging the theatre's salvation.

Running for the NDP in the redistributed and hotly-contested seat of Vancouver-Little Mountain after Grace McCarthy's retirement, I thought saving the Stanley would make a good campaign issue. The Vancouver Sun's cultural reporter, the late Elizabeth Aird, asked me whether I thought the Stanley could possibly be saved. On the spur of the moment, and somewhat tongue-in-cheek, I answered that "if enough people went to the final showing of Fantasia and liked it so much that they stayed to watch it again, that might help."

Famous Players interpreted this as a threat of a sit-in occupation and arranged heavy security for the final showings. This propelled the story a little further. I announced that if I was elected MLA, I would work to preserve the theatre as a heritage building.

Then, as the campaign began, Liberal candidate, and amateur actor, Michael Stebner telephoned me. He wanted to know whether it "would be okay" if he also endorsed saving the Stanley. I replied that Canada was still a country where electoral candidates were allowed freedom of thought, but suggested we collaborate.

We were less scripted in those days. NDP leader Mike Harcourt expected discipline, but he never insisted on slavish recapitulation of a "message box." As a "child of the 60s" Mike had probably read Orwell and may have abhorred "grouphink."

Then I had a better idea: Why not invite the Social Credit candidate to support saving the Stanley in a joint declaration by the three candidates that had a chance of winning the seat? Sharon White, now President of the Liberal Party of BC, was the rookie Socred candidate and agreed to join us.



I organized a media event outside the Stanley. In those days it was still considered gentlemanly to defer to a woman, so I suggested that Sharon speak first. She was willing, but as a political novice, she asked me: "What should I say?"

My reply: "Just say you support saving the Stanley." She did. Michael Stebner and I also kept our remarks short and we established what may still be a precedent without sequel ... three candidates all supported a controversial but popular idea.

I went on to win the seat, although it was the year Gordon Wilson "won" the television debate and Michael Stebner came close. Thanks to federal/provincial infrastructure funding and support from then Minister Glen Clark and Premier Mike Harcourt, enough funding was provided to make the crucial difference in saving the Stanley.

How many people regret that now? I'll bet many more MLAs and candidates regret the hyper-partisanship that prevents this kind of collaboration, especially after the election dust settles.



# Campaigns of yesteryear

## A high five for the ages makes front page

By Jeff Bray  
Victoria-Beacon Hill, 2001-2005



The May 2001 campaign for Victoria-Beacon Hill encompassed downtown. For expediency, we made use of David Anderson's federal campaign office from a few months earlier. It had been wired for all the television/radio outlets in town. As such, on election night all the news outlets figured that would be a convenient place to do any 'live shots' for the 11 p.m. news.

Well, as the results had been rolling in all night, ours was one of the ridings that was too close to call. My campaign team finally called me to come into the office at 10:45 to do my 'speech' as all the news outlets needed something. So I had to give the 'hurry up and wait' speech.

I had to thank everyone for volunteering, congratulate all the other candidates and winners, even though we did not have a result. As I spoke on stage, I saw my campaign manager receive a message and watched his expression go blank; at this point I assumed we had lost, but still had to finish my speech.

As it turned out, I was declared the winner by 37 votes, which meant a recount. So all my interviews that evening had to continue the hurry up and wait theme. The next two weeks were among the longest in my life.

In May 2005 at our campaign office on election night, I stood on the stage and gave my concession speech, congratulating the others candidates for running and Carole James on her well-earned victory.

There was a fair amount of press and many supporters in the room. Also, there was my four-year-old daughter sitting on the edge of the stage. Although she did not necessarily understand everything going on, she must have sensed that there was some sadness in the room, and that I was somehow the focus. So in the middle of my speech, she hopped up on stage, came over to me and gave me a high-five.

It was a spontaneous and loving gesture that I will always remember and it was on the front page of the local paper later that week.

## "If it's not your bus, you have my vote"

By Val Roddick  
Delta South, 1999-2009

Elections of all shapes and sizes morph into a world of their own. The only way to navigate them as a candidate is to try and be as prepared as possible and have a good sense of humour. We are all back to reality with a bump once voting day has come and gone.

A couple of lighthearted examples of fun on the campaign trail spring to mind:

During one campaign a candidate hired an interesting but rather beaten up bus-from-hell which endlessly drove around the riding BLARING out Willy Nelson's "On the Road Again" at conversation-stopping volume. I was 'mall walking' and had dropped into a local bakery where a young voter yelled over the cacophony of said bus: "If it's not your bus, you have my vote."

Delta South has 23,000 acres of wonderful, productive farmland both soil-based and a small, but intensive, percentage under glass. During one contentious all candidates meeting, one of the many 'hot' issues we faced locally was the expansion of greenhouses. There were six candidates that were asked to state a position and the temperature was rapidly rising in the room.

The final speaker was from the Marijuana Party. His reply brought the house down as everyone burst out laughing. He was given a standing ovation and the temperature dropped. "I really don't know much about the value of the local farming business here, but I sure know a lot about growing my particular crop in a greenhouse. So, I fully support them and suggest we all adjourn outside for a smoke."

And, precious lessons learned in that very first campaign: Always check to make sure any microphone you are using hasn't been accidentally turned off, especially if it is for a timed response.

Be positive.



# Effective electoral boundaries ... it's complex

Back in 2008 we were reminded by then-Chief Electoral Officer Harry Neufeld that “effective representation is a complex idea.”

“It requires,” he wrote, “that our electoral map achieve a balance between the principle of voting equality and factors like geography, demographics and history. Every vote must have approximately the same value and representation must reflect local community interests.”

This principle is guaranteed in Section 3 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And, since it was signed into law in 1982, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that the right to vote extends beyond the right to simply cast a ballot. It guarantees the right of every Canadian to receive “effective representation.”

We jump ahead to 2017 and find ourselves heading to the polls in BC to elect 87 MLAs, up two from the 2013 vote.

As prescribed by the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, a new electoral boundaries commission must be established after every second general election to propose changes to the area, boundaries and names of the electoral districts of British Columbia. The commission was appointed in May 2014 with Justice Thomas Melnick as its chair.

Melnick says: “We began our duties by educating ourselves about the nature and process of assessing and setting electoral boundaries, and the history of electoral boundaries commissions in the province. It was important not to form early opinions about where any of the electoral district boundaries should be.”

Between September and November 2014, the three person commission travelled the province, visiting 29 communities and hearing from 128 presenters. It received an additional 295 written submissions. A Preliminary Report containing initial proposals went to the Legislative Assembly two years ago and in April and May of 2015 the commission gathered more input online and at 15 additional community hearings. Another 426 written submissions were received.

The Legislative Assembly voted to approve the proposals and on November 17, 2015 passed the Electoral Districts Act, establishing 87 electoral districts.

The two new ridings of Surrey South and Richmond-Queensborough are among the commission's 48 proposed boundary changes that include shifts in Hope, Princeton and Cumberland on Vancouver Island.

The commission said huge population growth in both Surrey and Richmond prompted the creation of the new ridings. The changes result in Cloverdale being split and represented in two Surrey-area ridings and the Queensborough neighbourhood of New Westminster being combined with Richmond to create a new riding.

While most other boundary changes are relatively minor, there were some significant shifts in the Hope/Princeton and Cumberland/Comox Valley regions.

Hope and Fraser Canyon communities were added to Fraser-Nicola to bring Fraser-Nicola closer to the provincial average. And, Princeton was added to Boundary-Similkameen

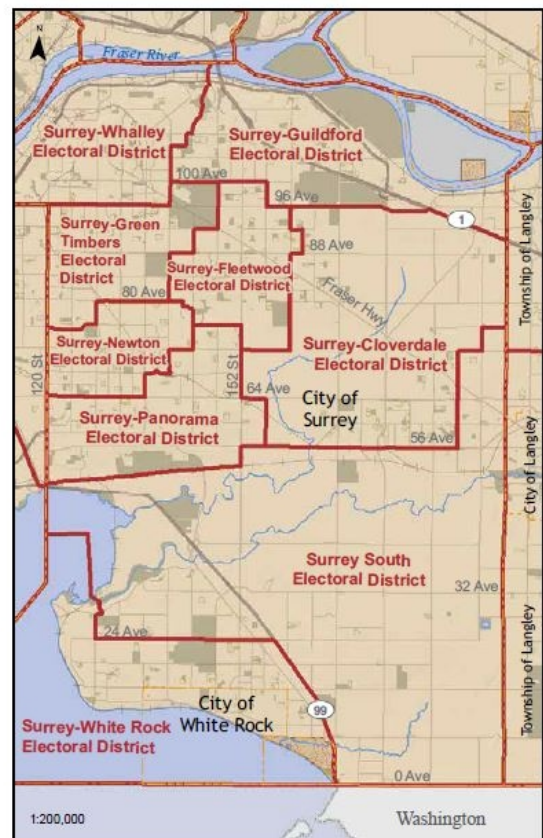
to bring the population of the district within the acceptable deviation from the provincial average of 53,119 based on the census estimates from 2014.

The disparity between the neighbouring districts of Comox Valley (22 per cent over the provincial population average) and Alberni-Pacific Rim (18 per cent under the provincial average) was too great.

Despite many submissions requesting no change to the Comox Valley, the commission concluded that the relative disparity was too great to ignore. With the proposed changes, Cumberland, Royston, Union Bay, Fanny Bay, along with Denman and Hornby islands and the southern Comox Valley are now part of the Mid Island-Pacific Rim electoral district, bringing both districts much closer to the provincial average while “ensuring strong communities of interest in both.”



*New Richmond-Queensborough riding*



*New Surrey South riding*

# Vancouver Island's young parliamentarians gather on Salt Spring

This spring break, a large group of engaged youth from across Vancouver Island turned their backs on the beaches and the ski hills to practice the fine art of parliamentary democracy.

Members of the 25th Vancouver Island Youth Parliament (VIYP) gathered at Gulf Islands Secondary School on Salt Spring Island to debate legislation drafted by VIYP Premier Lina Losier and her cabinet ministers.

Regional Youth Parliaments are an excellent method of teaching public speaking and parliamentarianism and they are a practical experience in leadership. Members debate resolutions pertaining to local, national and international issues of their own choosing, and create legislation that outlines their activities for the year.

VIYP's upcoming activities will include a clothing drive on the south island and a coffee fundraiser to raise money for the BC Youth Parliament's Camp Pheonix for kids who need a helping hand.

Wynn Rederburg, the VIYP Minister of Public Relations says: "This year brought a ... steep rise in membership, as more students from across the island showed interest in parliamentary systems and processes.

"For members, VIYP is a year-long commitment that includes projects and events in communities across the island. The VIYP cabinet presented legislation with a focus

on promoting service by encouraging members to reach out within their neighbourhoods.

"VIYP Premier Losier and her cabinet are determined to work with the membership individually to develop service projects that will best serve their local communities."

The Vancouver Island Youth Parliament has been in operation for 25 years. To celebrate the anniversary, the organization will be returning to its roots in community service. VIYP Chair Kyle Dow says: "In honour of the 25th Parliament, we're looking to focus on the service projects of our members.

"The Vancouver Island Youth Parliament was founded to support island communities by encouraging youth to engage through service projects, socials, and fundraisers. We're looking to spend the year with a strong focus on that ideal, starting with the sessional weekend on Salt Spring."

Given that the event took place within the Saanich-Gulf Islands constituency, MP Elizabeth May visited the gathering during the weekend to give greetings and discuss the importance and power of political engagement in youth.

VIYP is one of seven regional youth parliaments run by members of the British Columbia Youth Parliament, a provincial service organization run by youth aged 16 to 21. The BCYP is supported by the Association of Former MLAs of BC through the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund.



Saanich-Gulf Islands Green Party MP Elizabeth May (centre) joins an enthusiastic group of Vancouver Island Youth Parliamentarians at a regional gathering on Salt Spring Island. Similar Youth Parliament meetings are taking place in all corners of BC this spring.

# Margaret Mitchell says farewell on International Women's Day

Former BC NDP MP Margaret Mitchell, a leading national voice for women's equality and domestic abuse awareness, has died at 92.

BC NDP MLA Shane Simpson (Vancouver Hastings) said: "It was appropriate she passed on International Women's Day as the fight for women's equality was such an important part of her life's work. She created a national debate when she called out male MPs who made jokes while she raised the issue of violence against women, chastising those MPs and calling it no laughing matter."



Mitchell represented the riding of Vancouver East from 1979 to 1993 after years of working in the area to increase public housing and improve the lives of people on welfare. In Ottawa, she pushed for the equality of women and the decriminalization of abortion, and served as the critic for immigration and housing, status of women and multiculturalism.

Former MLA and close friend Darlene Marzari described Margaret "as a beacon for women and for minority rights."

"Margaret shone when she addressed the issues of Chinese head tax and spousal abuse in the Canadian Parliament. As a mentor for many poverty groups, public housing residents, and Vancouver neighbourhoods through the '60s and '70s, Margaret taught the principles of inclusion and democracy as she helped them develop their voices to speak

for social justice and fairness. Including people in decisions affecting their lives was the cornerstone of her value system."

Darlene added: "As a friend, she was generous with herself and all she owned. Into her late 80s she travelled like a trooper, through olive groves in Chile and the Red Square in Moscow. And, she roared with laughter when teased about being a 'national treasure'... which, of course, she was."

NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair said: "Her legacy is forever woven into the history of the women's movement in Canada. We honour her memory today, and every day, by fighting for women's rights and a better Canada where no one is left behind."

As well, the NDP's Nathan Cullen paid tribute to Mitchell in the House of Commons: "From before her time here, throughout her entire existence as a Member of Parliament, she fought for justice for women."

When Mitchell raised concerns about domestic abuse 35 years ago in the Commons, her comments were met with laughter. In a 2012 letter published by The Vancouver Sun, Mitchell recalled that moment: "When I stood up in the House of Commons in 1982 to inform the members that spousal abuse occurred in 10 per cent of Canadian families, many male members of the House laughed and the country was shocked."

In her autobiography "No Laughing Matter," Mitchell wrote that the initial jeering by the male-dominated House of Commons provoked a national uproar, but also opened the doors to discussing spousal violence in Canada.

She was given Vancouver's Freedom of the City award in November 2016. At the time Mayor Gregor Robertson said: "Margaret Mitchell has been a selfless advocate and supporter of marginalized communities. Her work has included ensuring foundational civil rights for all Canadians, and legally enshrining women's equality by advocating for and amending the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

Born in 1925, Margaret attended McMaster University and the University of Toronto where she obtained a Master of Social Work degree. After travelling and working for the Red Cross, Margaret married in 1957 and she and her husband returned to Canada and settled in Vancouver.

Margaret pioneered community development in various neighbourhoods including Riley Park, Hastings-Sunrise, Grandview and Strathcona. She helped organize public housing, opportunities for people on welfare and coalitions to fight freeways and build cooperative housing.

The Margaret Mitchell Fund for Women is a testament to her tireless efforts for social and economic justice, and will carry on her legacy for women's rights. Monies from this fund are given to projects that help alleviate poverty, promote equality and help women to gain confidence and power.

Margaret received the Order of BC in 2000.



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# Len Norris



August 18, 1984

*"Not bad ... but not as good a grovel as their leaders' on TV."*

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

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

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

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Go to [www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca](http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca)

Click on the [Make a Donation](#) button and then on the "Online" link and then the [CanadaHelps](#) link which will take you to the Foundation's page on the CanadaHelps web site.

Click to indicate whether you want to donate now or monthly and you will be taken through the steps to make your donation.

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

You may pay with VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Interac or through a PayPal account.

After you pay for your gift, CanadaHelps.org will send you an online receipt.

There are several privacy permissions available. If you choose to include your name and address in the information which is sent to the Victoria Foundation, the Association will be pleased to acknowledge your gift.

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)

# Member News

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

## Where Are They Now?

### Bonnie McKinnon

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

This month we welcome Bonnie McKinnon who served as a Liberal and Independent MLA representing the riding of Surrey-Cloverdale from 1996 to 2001. McKinnon also served as a member of Surrey City Council and was president of the Surrey Board of Trade.



I really fell into politics through business. I represented the family business at the Cloverdale Board of Trade, and after being President for three years I was asked to run for Surrey City Council in 1993. I won the election by topping the poles as everyone's second choice. In this case it really paid to be the "runner up."

With Dianne Watts help as my campaign manager, I won the MLA seat for Surrey-Cloverdale in 1996. As you know, Dianne went on to be very influential in Surrey as an excellent Mayor and now a sitting MP for South Surrey-White Rock.

I would have to say that I was most influenced by the negative "old boys club" of politics and the demands of party loyalty. There is much to be said for open discussion on policies, procedures and directions, and I felt very limited in the positive influences I wanted to create.

The McKinnon family has always been a family of influence and I made the transition to public life with some minor bumps in the road. I never minded being a public person and enjoyed serving the constituents in my riding. I celebrated the positive ways I could help and really never learned to play the political game and party politics.

For more than 30 years I have pursued my interest in alternative healing and the exploration of the human potential. The transition back to private life was very easy for me as I continued with Geotran and the International Success Institute ([www.geotran.com](http://www.geotran.com)). Dorothy Espiau, the institute founder, changed my life forever.

I wish that I had met Dorothy earlier. Since being an MLA, the greatest lesson I have learned is to focus on the positive and what you want to create in your life. We are always going to be offered challenges. It is how you face those challenges and the decisions you make that determine the degree of success you have.

I have always had a passion to create, utilizing many different forms to express the innate beauty in the world and in the world inside us. I went to BCIT and studied Web Design and Photoshop. I paint and design and make jewelry. I continue to pursue my passion for excellence and innovation in health, including structured water.

I am in partnership in business with my friend Marilyn Collins. For 30 years we have studied together, travelled together and most importantly, laughed together. Our website is ([www.sistersinlaws.com](http://www.sistersinlaws.com)) as we are truly spirit sisters.

Most of all, remember to be kind to one another. Everything we do is about relationships and the bonds we form. I will always remember my time as an MLA and appreciate the value of staying connected through the Association of Former MLAs of BC.

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## The “great, grim hill” claimed 3,598 Canadians



*At first light, 100,000 infantry, mostly Canadians, fixed bayonets and stormed Vimy Ridge*

by Jim Hume

It was 5:25 a.m. Monday, April 9, 1917. Massed artillery, that for days has been pounding German defences entrenched on the heights of Vimy Ridge, had fallen eerily silent. In the palpable pre-dawn darkness of France 100,000 infantrymen, most of them Canadians, waited for a signal that would send them, bayonets fixed, storming from the base of Vimy Ridge to its well-defended peak.

The signal came at precisely 5:30 a.m. in the glimmer of first light. As officers blew their whistles the silent guns stirred again in anger, calibrated now as a “creeping barrage” to march just ahead of the infantry up what war correspondent Philip Gibbs described as “that great, grim hill which dominates the plain of Douai and the coal fields of Lens and the German positions around Arras.”

It was the beginning of the Battle for Vimy Ridge, the battle military historians list as the great turning point in Canadian history; the battle that saw four Canadian divisions fighting together as a unified force for the first

time and winning a victory that had been denied other armies. Vimy, they say, was the beginning of Canada’s evolution from dominion to independent nation.

War time reporter Gibbs was there to witness the event: “The hour for attack was 5:30. Officers were looking at their wrist watches. The earth lightened ... there was a strange and solemn hush. We waited, and pulses beat faster than the second hands. ‘They’re away,’ said a voice by my side ... It was dawn now, but clouded and storm swept ... On the higher ground our men were fighting forward ... I saw two waves of infantry advancing against enemy trenches ... They went in a slow, leisurely way, not hurried though the enemy’s shrapnel was searching for them ... ‘Grand fellows’ said an officer lying next to me on the wet slope...”

“Grand fellows” indeed, although as a phrase it sounds archaic 100 years later and far too Downton Abbey when describing a bloody battle scene that left 3,598 Canadian

*continued next page*

young men dead on that "great, grim hill" and sent another 10,000 or so home wounded in body or mind and sometimes both.

Reporters, like Gibbs, did their best to convey some of the horrors of otherwise "glorious" battle fields, but were forbidden to report or write anything that might lower the morale of fighting men or their families. The Defence of the Realm Act (DRA) had become law in England four days after the First World War started in 1914 thus giving credence to the well-established proverb "the first casualty of war is truth."

Gibbs began reporting on the First World War within days of the British Expeditionary Force arriving in France, but after his first completely honest battle report he was ordered home, hauled before a disciplinary body and told to change his ways or face a firing squad

The threat was not idle. One section of the DRA read: "No person shall by word of mouth or in writing spread reports likely to cause disaffection or alarm among any of His Majesty's forces or among the civilian population." Gibbs, like other reporters, reluctantly agreed to the reporting rules, but managed by skillful phrasing to convey the grim realities of the battlefields.

And, he never failed to tweak the conscience of those who glorified war with the claim that God was on their side. Easter Sunday, the day before the great assault on Vimy Ridge, Gibbs went for a walk through nearby villages. He wrote that he was "filled with a tense, restless emotion, and some of us smiled with a kind of irony because it was Easter Sunday. In the little villages behind the battle lines the bells of the French churches were ringing gladly because the Lord had risen, and on the altar steps the priests were reciting the splendid old words of faith 'I have arisen and am with thee always. Alleluia' ... As I walked up the road to the battle lines I passed a battalion of our men ... standing in a hollow square with bowed heads while the chaplain conducted the Easter service."

While Gibbs was prevented by law from telling detailed truths which might upset people at home in England there were no restrictions on describing the great slaughter of German soldiers. The massed artillery found easy targets preceding and during the infantry attack. "Troops massing on the sloping ground were shattered, guns and limbers on the move... men and horses were killed ... The enemy losses were frightful, and the scenes behind his lines must have been and still be hideous in slaughter and terror ... He has lost already nearly 10,000 prisoners ... and in dead and wounded his losses are great."

And then he penned a message which must surely have been understood by every woman – and man – able to read an English newspaper: "It is a black day for the German armies – and for the German women who do not know yet what it means to them." German casualties totaled in excess of 20,000.

The real horror of Vimy for Canadians, kept secret until after the war, was officially recorded by the 2nd Division's 6th Brigade (the "Iron Sixth," comprised of Western



German POWs evacuate Canadian wounded

Canadians), as they made their way into the fight at about 9 a.m., four hours after the first wave: "Wounded men (were) sprawled everywhere in the slime, in the shell holes, in the mine craters, some screaming to the skies, some lying silently, some begging for help, some struggling to keep from drowning in (water-filled) craters, the field swarming with stretcher-bearers trying to keep up with the casualties."

It can be fairly added that the ultimate victory was a bad day for Canada and for at least 3,598 Canadian wives and mothers when informed of the cost of victory.

One hundred years later, we remember the men who stood in the pre-dawn dark of an Easter Monday and were part of one of Canada's greatest military victories, a battlefield triumph that led to nationhood.

It is an event worth remembering – but only if we remember and also learn.

Philip Gibbs was awarded a Knighthood for his wartime reporting, even though openly embarrassed about the restrictions he was forced to work under. About 20 years before the outbreak of the Second World War he wrote a voluminous book – Now It Can Be Told - with this introduction: "In this book I have written about some aspects of the war which, I believe, the world must know and remember, not only as a memorial of men's courage in the tragic years, but as a warning of what will happen again – surely – if a heritage of evil and of folly is not cut out of the hearts of the peoples. Here it is – the reality of modern warfare not only as it appears to British soldiers of whom I can tell, but to soldiers on all the fronts where conditions were the same."

So, let Canadians remember Vimy Ridge with pride if we must. But let us also remember the cost of the sacrifices demanded in our "heritage of evil and folly" since the slaughters of two world wars and seemingly never ending small ones.

**(Now It Can Be Told can still be found for purchase on-line or ordered from most good books stores – or downloaded free via Project Gutenberg [www.gutenberg.org/files](http://www.gutenberg.org/files).)**