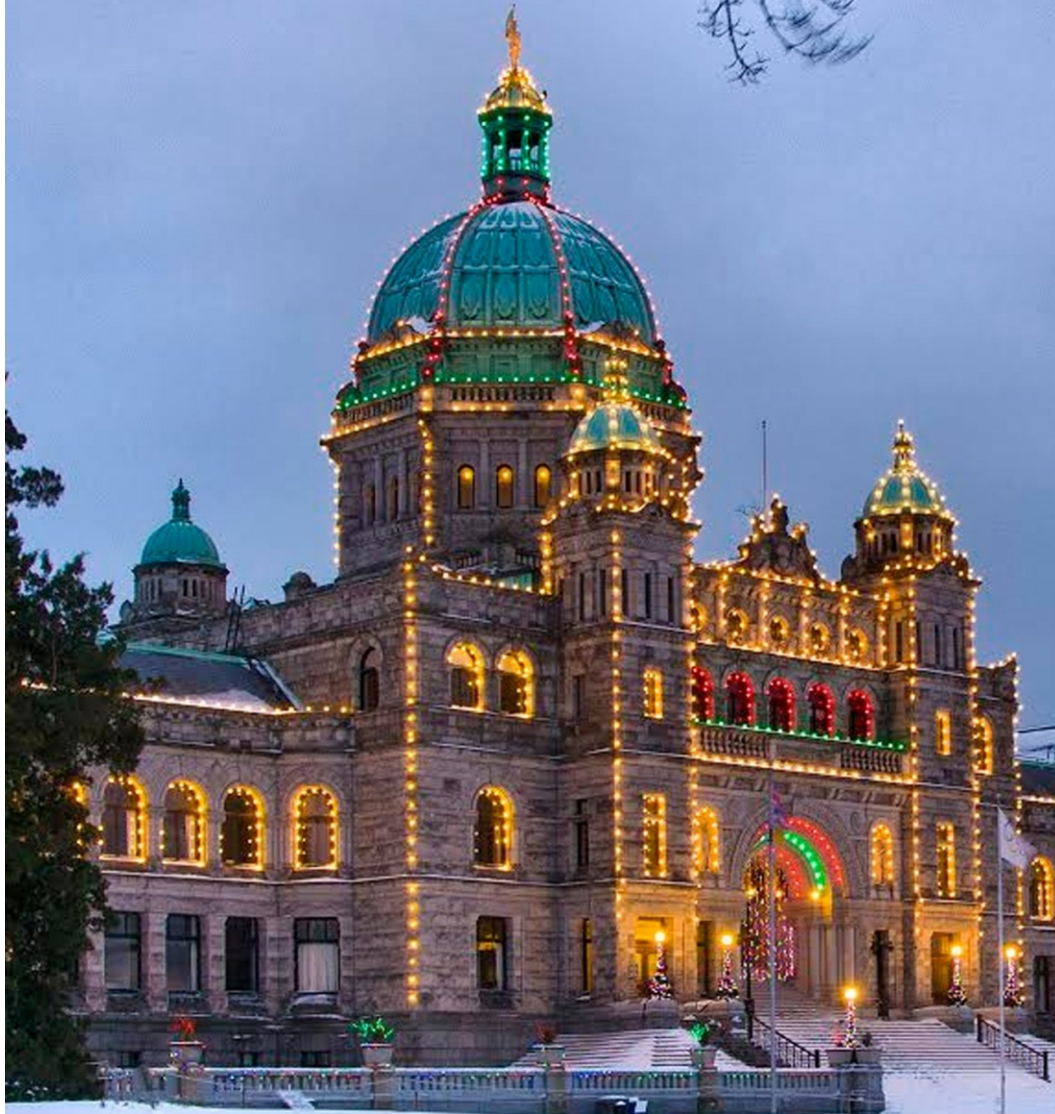


Happy Holidays



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The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

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

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

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

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

Thank You and Miscellany

Dues, Subscriptions and Donations

Colin Gabelmann, Campbell River

From the Editor's Desk

As we tumble through the years it is comforting to cling to cherished traditions. At Christmas, every year without fail, watching the 1951 black and white version of *A Christmas Carol* is my Yule tradition.

Thanks to the release of a new movie, *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, I have a deeper appreciation for the ghostly journey to redemption that actor Alastair Sim portrayed so brilliantly.

In 1843, Charles Dickens was a most troubled failing author. He was also tormented by the secret shame of his bankrupt father being jailed and his own painful experience working in a dark sweat shop as a youth. A Christmas Carol turned him into a literary rock star.

To this day, the 1951 version is the standard by which all other Scrooges are judged. The power of Boxing Day morning in Scrooge's office when the old miser "comes to" his senses and embraces life is truly epic.

It always reminds me that, in all our lives, there is always a little room for redemption.



Parliamentary Education Officer Adriana Ayers reports that this year, a little earlier than usual, staff from several departments at the Legislature decorated the building in its winter attire. "On Nov. 28th we celebrated the 33rd annual Christmas Lights Across Canada event. Hosted by the Speaker, this lively celebration unites BC citizens with Canadians across the country as each legislature is illuminated with thousands of lights."

In Victoria, this event featured performances by local student and adult choirs, a rousing carol band, and a visit from characters of BC's early history (as portrayed by the Parliamentary Players).

The Speaker's Family Christmas party – a longstanding tradition – is a highlight for staff and their families during the holiday season. This year it will be celebrated on the 14th. Young children get a chance to enjoy the festive decorations, make special holiday crafts and visit with Santa himself – often portrayed by a good-natured MLA.

"Now is a wonderful time of year to return to the Parliament Buildings for a visit and get caught up in the merriment of the season," Adriana reminds us.

You can even pop by the Legislative gift shop for a last minute stocking stuffer.

A message from the President

“IT’S THAT TIME OF YEAR”

It is that time of year to renew your membership in the Association of Former MLAs of BC.

Without your annual dues we would not be able to publish this excellent newsletter 10 times a year. In his interview last month, Dr. Terry Huberts said: “Thank you to OOTD for all the work that you do to help us stay informed and connected.” That is the goal of OOTD and we need everyone to renew their membership to help us continue. As you are sending out Christmas and year end greetings please take the time to send us your renewal.

This year has certainly been eventful. We celebrated Canada’s sesquicentennial anniversary.

Across Canada there were imaginative and unique events to honour our country’s heritage. There were art exhibits, concerts, parties, theatre and storytelling. We also honoured the lands that we live on that have a history of 15,000 years of continuous habitation. Without the stories of elected officials since 1867 we would not have the same understanding of how our political system has evolved.

We also honoured the Canadian soldiers who fought and died at the Battles of Vimy Ridge and Passchendale

100 years ago. And, there were numerous events celebrating the courageous women who, 100 years ago, won the right to vote in BC. It took longer to extend that to all women.

It was the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Association of Former MLA’s of BC. At the annual dinner, we honoured the founders of the organization. We collected more stories and photographs of MLAs to preserve our history to pass on to future MLAs.

The continuation of the principles and philosophy of our Legislature will be in the hands of new MLAs. We have been very pleased to support the BC Youth Parliament. You may have noticed that BCYP is a contributor to OOTD. This is where our legacy rests. This is where our future lies.

Thank you for everything you have done this past year to enrich our province. We will look forward with expectation to 2018.

WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



~ Penny Priddy

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BC's defender of a working man's suds is remembered

BC's longest serving MLA and a staunch defender of the working man's brew is being celebrated long after his death.

Thomas Uphill represented Fernie from 1920 to 1960. The lone member of the Federated Labour Party got his start during Prohibition, which he opposed because it curbed the average worker's right to have a beer at the end of the day. When there was talk about returning to a form of Prohibition during the Second World War, he stood up in the Legislature and brandished a bottle of beer, declaring: "Beer is as necessary to the worker as milk is to the baby... Hands off the workers' beer!"

Wayne Norton, a Victoria historian who has written about Uphill's fight against restrictions on beer for *Canada's History* magazine, recently came up with the idea of commemorating Uphill with a beer.

All he needed was a brewer to make it and that's where Swans Brewpub brewer Chris Lukie entered the picture. Lukie put a recipe together and brewed up Thomas Uphill Amber Ale. It was poured at a gathering at Swans in October. Uphill's famous defense of a jug of suds after work is commemorated on the label on the bottle.



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Now Norton is asking the Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia for support in his effort to honour Uphill. “The longest-serving MLA in the history of this province deserves a modest plaque acknowledging that achievement in some quiet corner of the Legislature.

“In the course of research for a book about Fernie during the years of the First World War, I have spent considerable time in the Legislative Library over the past two years. I took the opportunity to search areas of the Legislature open to the public for some kind of recognition for former MLA Thomas Uphill.

“Uphill was the Independent Labour MLA. All major parties tried unsuccessfully to unseat him. By the mid-1950s, newspaper reports were claiming he was the longest continuously serving politician in Canadian history and in the British Commonwealth. I cannot confirm those claims. Indeed, I would not even know how to investigate them, but his term of office in this province is a matter easily verified. That achievement surely deserves recognition,” Norton says.

Norton adds that his MLA, Carole James, expressed an interest in this earlier this year. “She told me it was

something a committee headed by the Speaker would have to consider. She also suggested this was a matter that could be of interest to the AFMLABC.”

Norton says the association “would do me a great favour if you could take this to your Board of Directors to ask if this is something the Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia or an individual member of the association might consider pursuing. Any course of action you might suggest would be most welcome.”

After his retirement in 1960, Uphill continued to make appearances and make speeches at events such as May Day organized by the Communists and later the Labor-Progressive Party.

Uphill was also the mayor of Fernie until he lost a close election in 1946, but managed to return to the office in 1950. He retired from the office in 1955 due to health reasons, though he remained in the provincial legislature for an additional term.

When he died in 1962, 22 flags flew at half-mast to mourn his passing. A senior citizen’s home was named the Tom Uphill Memorial Home in his honour.



Joseph ... the remarkable 'Father of Christmas'

By Jim Hume

Bethlehem was already an ancient town when a young couple trudged the last few metres of what had been a 193-kilometre hike from their hometown of Nazareth. The journey had not been voluntary. The Roman army of occupation – one of several the country had seen since King David's glorious 40-year rule – was conducting a taxation census. Under Roman rules that meant all men of adult age had to register in their place of birth and record their tribal affiliation.

The young man helping his wife the last few steps up a limestone ridge to the gates of a once proud but now shabby, almost forgotten town 770 meters above sea level, was named Joseph "of the House of David." His partner's name was Mary. She was close to full-term pregnant. But not with his child, and not yet married.

The young carpenter and Mary were "espoused" but not wed. It was years later that a remarkable journalist named Matthew provided details. In what we know today as The Gospel of Matthew, he tells us that just before they set out on their momentous journey Joseph got the word from Mary that she was pregnant: They were "espoused" wrote Matthew delicately, "but before they came together she was found with child."

Joseph usually plays a silent walk-on role in traditional nativity plays, but he should really be one of the stars when the Christmas story of loving, understanding and giving is told.

His first reaction to his fiancé's pregnancy was understandable. First, he thought he should "denounce" her in public, and then that he should just "put her away," banish her to some remote place thus hiding his and her shame. As Matthew tells it, "Joseph being a just man and not willing to make her a public example was minded to put her away."

But he didn't; he married her instead.

And, I think that's one of the greatest Christmas stories. The story of a man's love for a woman; of integrity, forgiveness, understanding and great compassion. Everything Christmas is supposed to be about, but all too rarely is.

The Gospels tell us that while Joseph was first wrestling with the problem, he had a dream telling him to accept the pregnancy and marry Mary: "And, being raised from sleep (he) did as ... bidden ... and took unto him his wife; and he knew her not 'till she had brought forth her first born son; and he called his name Jesus." I like to think the qualities of love, forgiveness and compassion later preached about by Jesus were lessons learned from his adopted dad.

It must have been a long, long journey of steps and uncertain conscience from Nazareth to Bethlehem.



In his scholarly treatise, *Desire Of The Everlasting Hills*, Thomas Cahill suggests that Joseph and Mary were in the ancient town as drop-in guests of Joseph's family. He notes in original Greek texts the word *kataluma* "which means a room occupied by human beings" is used for their lodgings. He suggests: "Mary and Joseph were not relegated to a romantic stable 'because there was no room for them in the inn', the old inaccurate translation. What is far more likely is that they were relegated to an unused room, originally set up for domestic cattle, because there was no room for them in the crowded family quarters of Joseph's poor Bethlehem relations, who could no doubt count to nine and may have relegated them to the worst room of the house because they disapproved of such an embarrassing pregnancy."

It's a version that appeals to me. I like the idea of tolerant Joseph dropping in unannounced on remote in-laws with a young woman he loved, was only recently married to and with his new wife very pregnant. What a field day for clucking gossip and frowning disapproval of in-laws! What a test for newlyweds.

Whether stable or cold back room, the young couple brought to birth a son who would eventually attract millions of followers and change the world.

This month, more than 2,000 years later, some of those followers will be celebrating that birth once again. Hymns will be sung about angels rejoicing, about Kings bearing royal gifts to a shabby lodging. Many will take in deeply moving midnight carol services.

Most of us will celebrate with gift exchanges that many can ill-afford. We shall eat too much, spend too much and drink too much with Christmas lights gaudily shining the way to bill paying days.

And, maybe a few of us will remember Joseph, the young carpenter who stands in Nativity shadows, but remains among the strongest symbols that are supposed to define the true spirit of Christmas – love, trust, giving and forgiving.

At least we can give it a try.

(Sources: *The Gospels*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Thomas Cahill's Desire of the Everlasting Hills* and *James Mills' Memoirs of Pontius Pilate, a meticulously researched novel*)

BCYP session much more than a mock parliament

By Sky T. Losier
Premier
BC Youth Parliament

Each year, from December 27th through to the 31st, 97 youth between the ages of 16 and 21 from across British Columbia, gather at our provincial Legislative Assembly. Over these five days in December, these young leaders debate the legislation proposed by my Cabinet that will govern our organization's activity for the upcoming year.

What is important to note is that BCYP is not a "mock" or "model" parliament. Our legislation has real implications and requires our membership to carry out projects after session if they wish to be eligible to return the next year and our Supply Act governs real money (just over \$40,000). This is money the membership raises by fundraising in their communities and funds projects like our Regional Youth Parliaments and Camp Phoenix.

Members also have the opportunity to draft and introduce Private Members Resolutions that will speak to important issues of the day, such as: electoral reform, energy projects, transportation infrastructure, humanitarian aid, and everything in-between. These resolutions allow the British Columbia Youth Parliament to take positions on issues our Membership is passionate about and communicate these positions to elected officials.

Perhaps more important than any legislation we pass, our annual parliamentary session allows for the new members of Youth Parliament to learn about the long history of our organization, make new friends that will last a lifetime, and get inspired for the year ahead. As a volunteer organization we ask a lot of our membership, but they always step up and tackle whatever the challenge may be. This commitment to service starts at the Legislative Assembly in December and carries with many of our members for the rest of their lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Association of Former MLAs of BC for their generous support of the BC Youth Parliament through the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund. Not only does this fund help support Youth Parliament, it also represents an important relationship between the Youth Parliament and the Association of Former MLAs. The shared dedication to community service and parliamentary democracy between our memberships is key to this important relationship. As young people engaged in our province's democracy, our membership looks to current and former elected officials such as yourselves for guidance and inspiration.



If you happen to find yourself in Victoria during our session, we would love to have you drop by and share a few stories from your time as an elected official with these young community leaders. If this is of interest, please contact Zara Herbert via email (zara.herbert@bcyp.org) to see when she might fit you in our schedule. If you'd like to simply come and observe our proceedings, the viewing galleries are open to the public during normal operating hours that can be found at www.leg.bc.ca.

Please let me know if you'll be dropping by, and I will be sure to introduce you to the House when you arrive. If you have any questions, I can be contacted via email (sky.losier@bcyp.org) or phone (250-221-0154).



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***Slouching Towards Innocence* ... BC politics with a fictional twist**

By Andrew MacLeod
The Tyee

Before Ron Norman retired from the British Columbia public service and wrote a novel loosely based on that experience, part of his job was to help plan public appearances for then-Premier Gordon Campbell.

One of those visits was to a technology company that had made a new video game. "We said to the Premier's staff, 'We think this would be a really good thing. He could go and play this video game.' And the first question that came out of the staff member's mouth was, 'Will he win?'"

Norman said he hadn't considered that question, but surely nobody would expect the Premier, who had never played the game before, to be able to beat the person who developed the game. The Premier's staff didn't think the public would be so forgiving.

The incident isn't included in Norman's first novel, *Slouching Towards Innocence*, but many others are that will feel familiar to watchers of BC politics. There is, for instance, an episode where a tone-deaf cabinet minister is bent on ejecting war veterans from their clubhouse.

Said Norman, "You do get ministers who just don't get it. Sometimes that happens, right?"

And there's great detail about the budget estimates debate, including instructions that notes to ministers must be passed under an aide's left arm. "People take themselves a little too seriously," he said.

The book should not, however, be read as a thinly veiled fictionalization of true events, Norman warned. Nor should people assume the characters are based on real people.

For example, on the second page we meet the novel's premier, Steven Davis, having sex with someone who isn't his wife. It's election night and he'll soon be giving a victory speech with his children at his side, as well as the woman he is married to.

"That was totally fiction," Norman said.

While he never saw anything like that, such tension exists in political and government circles, he said. That tension extends to competition among the politicians and staff on things like style. "I took that and tweaked it up a notch," he said. "I don't know if anyone had expensive shoes, but I made them have expensive shoes in the story."

Norman said the premier in his novel is definitely not Campbell, and in fact he had more of a Ralph Klein type figure in mind.

While Campbell was interested in public policy, the novel's Premier Davis is not. "He's all about style," Norman said.



Nor is Norman's main character, Malcolm, based on himself. By the time Norman arrived in Victoria, he was in his late 40s, he'd had kids, worked on a newspaper and been a school trustee. Even with that life experience, it was a bewildering place. "It was an eye-opener in how it all worked," he said. "When I got to Victoria it was like being in a foreign country and speaking a foreign language."

The book includes a press gallery that has two senior members resented for their offices separate from the rest of the media in a red brick building behind the Legislature. The arrangement is similar to the current one for the *Vancouver Sun's* Vaughn Palmer and Global TV's Keith Baldrey.

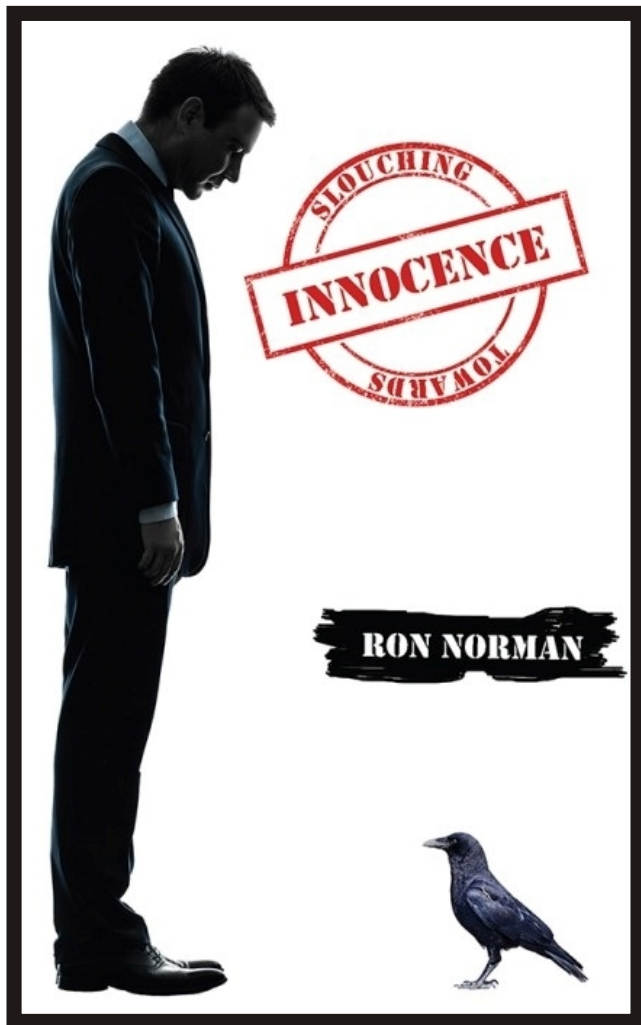
Norman said that while he kept the positions, which exist beyond the people currently in them, the people in them are his creations. "I tried to fill them, like I did with the political staff, with fictional people," he said. In the book, the *Sun* columnist is a woman.

"I often found the media thought they knew what was going on, but it was like the tip of the iceberg," said Norman. "They think they're seeing it because it's in the Legislature, but the Legislature is only a portion of what goes on."

In the end, readers of the novel will get a feel for how government works from someone who has been there. "Once you're in the system you get pretty familiar with it. It becomes pretty routine," said Norman. "So, I was thinking maybe other people might be interested in seeing where the Legislature is, how it smells, what it feels like, how the thing works, the dynamics between the media, the politicians and the electorate."

(We have edited Andrew's review for space. Our thanks to the Tyee and Andrew for sharing.)

What people are saying about *Slouching Towards Innocence*



“Ron Norman brings an insider’s eye and a skillful hand to the always quirky netherworld of BC politics. *Slouching Towards Innocence* grabbed me from the first page and just wouldn’t let go. Scandals, cover-ups, spinning, sinning, and winning, this tale has it all. I’d love it even more if it weren’t quite so plausible.”

— Terry Fallis, two-time winner of the Leacock Medal

“Ron Norman gained his insights about politics from both sides of the media relations fence — covering it as a journalist, then working for government communications. Along the way, he learned that the most important tool in the survival kit was having a good sense of humour. Now he combines all of that with his narrative skills into a story that will have insiders trying to guess the identity of the players, and outsiders wondering if it really could be like that. It is.”

— Vaughn Palmer, *Vancouver Sun* provincial affairs political columnist

“*Slouching Towards Innocence* commences at a rip-roaring pace and maintains it throughout. When it comes to British Columbia politics, Ron Norman is the consummate insider — and it shows. This sharply observed novel radiates authenticity on each and every page. Fans of *Yes, Prime Minister* and *House of Cards* will especially respond to a singular comic vision that’s both satirical and deeply human.”

— Adrian Chamberlain, books and arts writer, *Victoria Times Colonist*



Proportional representation ... the primer

(Editor's note: Electoral reform with the possible introduction of proportional representation (PR) is a hot topic federally and here in BC. We have voted twice on 'prop rep' rejecting it both times. In 2005, it fell just a few percentage points short of the 60 per cent approval threshold. In 2009, support sank to 39 per cent, when voters were offered a choice — PR or first past the post. The turnout was 61 per cent and 55 per cent respectively.)

What Is Proportional Representation (PR)? The Library of Parliament describes it as a system of parliamentary representation in which the number of seats each party has in the House of Commons is in proportion to its share of the popular vote. There are several types of proportional representation voting systems. Currently, Canada has a "first-past-the-post" (FPTP) system, also known as a "single-member plurality" system.

The main criticism of Canada's FPTP system is that a party's share of the national vote is not necessarily reflected in its share of parliamentary seats. Some parties receive a greater share of seats than their share of the vote, while some receive a lesser share. On the other hand, the percentage of seats won by regionally based parties – such as the Bloc Québécois – was closer to its percentage of the popular vote.

Critics of the current system also argue that, in addition to producing disproportionate results, it results in the under-representation of women, minority groups and Aboriginal peoples, and there is less diversity in the House of Commons than in society at large.

Furthermore, many argue that the FPTP system "disregards" a large number of votes. Voters who did not support the winning candidate in their riding may feel as though their votes did not matter and may be discouraged from voting.

Proposals over the decades:

In 1979, the Task Force on Canadian Unity (the Pepin-Robarts Task Force) proposed a mixed member proportional system based on the German model. It proposed adding seats to the House of Commons, with the additional seats allocated to parties on the basis of their national vote, and then distributed among the provinces.

In 1985, the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (the Macdonald Commission), on the other hand, was skeptical about the introduction of proportional representation for the House of Commons. It judged that a mixed member proportional system would be too expensive and complicated, and raised questions about creating two classes of MPs.

In 2004, the Law Commission of Canada issued a report in which it proposed a mixed member proportional electoral system based on the Scottish system. Under this proposal, two-thirds of the members of the House of Commons would be elected in constituency races using the first-past-the-post method, and the remaining one-third would be elected from provincial or territorial party lists. In addition, one list seat each would be allotted to Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon.

What could be the impact on parliament?

Adding an element of proportionality to Canada's electoral system would have significant implications for Parliament. Some of these might be:

- **A more representative Parliament.** The number of seats won by political parties would more closely match their electoral support.
- **More, smaller parties.** Because the threshold for admission for new parties would be lower, movements such as the Greens might have a better chance at winning seats.
- **Fewer, larger constituencies.** Under the proposed mixed member proportional systems, there would be fewer constituency MPs. Constituencies would therefore be larger.
- **Changed roles for MPs.** Some observers are concerned that, if there were two "classes" of MPs – constituency MPs and list MPs – list MPs would have a lower status. The list MPs would likely have a lighter constituency workload and be able to devote more time to policy issues. However, the experience in Germany and New Zealand suggests that there would be little tension between the two types of MPs.
- **Less regional polarization.** Party caucuses would be more likely to include representatives from most major provinces.
- **More coalition cabinets.** Single-party majority governments would likely become the exception. If the experience of proportional representation in other countries is anything to go by, coalition cabinets would be more frequent than minority governments. At the same time, cabinets would tend to be less durable.
- **Weaker prime ministers.** Coalition cabinets would likely limit the ability of the prime minister to act independently.
- **More powerful committees.** In both the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, committees have played a greater role, both in scrutiny and policy formation. They have been no less partisan, however.

The gender scales are still tipping

Data collected by Ipsos this year shows that although the vast majority of people in 24 countries around the world say they believe men and women should be treated equally (88 per cent on average), most still think the current situation is one of inequality in terms of social, political and/or economic rights (72 per cent on average).

Women are more positive when it comes to their own lives – six in 10 on average agree they have “full equality with men in their country and the freedom to reach their full dreams and aspirations” – although this still means that in several countries many women disagree.

The survey, among online adults aged under 65 in Australia, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Britain, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States, also finds a majority on average define themselves as a feminist (58 per cent on average), even though a quarter (24 per cent) say they are scared to speak up for equal rights – especially in India.

Commenting on the findings, David Elliott, Director Ipsos Social Research Institute said: “Ipsos’ international study suggests that the principle of gender equality is making more progress around the world than the reality. It’s encouraging that the vast majority of both men and women around the world believe in equal opportunity, and that ‘feminism’ doesn’t seem to be a minority pursuit – but at the same time most still believe that true equality of rights is not here yet.

“There also remains a minority of both sexes who believe in male superiority – but perhaps most concerning is the one in four who are scared to speak up for equal rights, especially in some pockets of the world.”

Key findings:

- Nine in 10 around the world (88 per cent on average) say they believe in equal opportunities for men and women, and the figure is high among both men and women (86 per cent and 89 per cent respectively). A clear majority in each of the 24 countries believes in this (lowest in Japan at 71 per cent).

- However, 72 per cent on average globally say that inequality currently exists in terms of social, political, and/or economic rights, especially among women (by 76 per cent to 68 per cent of men). Again, a majority in every country believes inequality exists, with the exception of Russia at only 42 per cent.

- On average, six in 10 (58 per cent) across the 24 countries say they would define themselves as feminist. And, seven in 10 (68 per cent) claim to actively support women’s rights by speaking up to change things rather than just thinking about them.

- However, one in four of both women and men say they are scared to speak up for equal rights for women. Fear of speaking out among women is especially high in India (54 per cent), Turkey (47 per cent) and Brazil (41 per cent), while in the U.S. more men say they are scared to speak up than women (by 28 per cent to 15 per cent).

- On average, one in five believes that women are inferior to men, or that women should not aspire to do anything outside of the household. Across the 24 countries as a whole, men are slightly more likely to believe that women should just stay at home (by 19 per cent to 14 per cent). Attitudes in Russia and India stand out – almost half of those asked in those countries believe that women are inferior to men (46 per cent each), as do one in three (33 per cent) in Serbia.



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Small town Connecticut election decided by coin toss

BOLTON, Conn. — An election for the governing board of a small Connecticut town has been decided by a coin toss.

Republican Michael Eremita on Tuesday kept his seat on Bolton's five-member Board of Selectmen with a coin-toss win over Democratic challenger Kim Miller. Both received 718 votes.



Under the town charter, tied elections can be decided by a special election or a coin toss. Eremita and Miller agreed on the latter because a special election could have cost up to \$3,000.

Eremita, Miller, and Town Clerk Elizabeth Waters all flipped coins. Eremita won because he and Waters both tossed tails. Miller came up heads.

Eremita's victory gave the board in the town of about 5,000 residents, located 10 miles (16 kilometres) east of Hartford, a 3-2 Republican advantage.

Polish government asks citizens to multiply like rabbits

WARSAW, Poland — The Polish government is urging citizens to go forth and multiply like rabbits.

In a country with one of the lowest birth rates in Europe, the Health Ministry has put out a short video praising rabbits for producing many offspring.



The spot shows rabbits munching on lettuce and carrots while a rabbit "narrator" reveals the secret of their big families — exercise, a healthy diet and little stress. The brief appearance of a human couple enjoying a romantic picnic hints that a little romance might help, too.

Viewers are told: "If you ever want to be a parent, follow the example of rabbits."

It is the latest step by the conservative government in this mostly Catholic country of 38 million to reverse a shrinking population.

Finnish police rap deputy minister for hiding in car trunk

HELSINKI (Reuters) - Finnish police reprimanded a man for traveling in a car trunk to hide his meeting with Prime Minister Juha Sipilä during a recent government crisis, saying this was a breach of the traffic code.

A police statement did not name the man in the trunk, but in effect indicated the traveler was State Secretary Samuli Virtanen, who is also the deputy to Foreign Minister Timo Soini.

The meeting took place a day after Virtanen's co-ruling Finns party had elected anti-immigration hardliners as its new leaders.

The government was close to collapse until a group of politicians, including Virtanen and Soini, in the following week walked out of the Finns party and announced they would form a new group.

The Finns party was thrown out of the government and the new "Blue Reform" group kept its cabinet seat.

Virtanen has not commented on the case, but lawmaker Tiina Elovaara from Blue Reform said in a blog that Virtanen climbed into the trunk to keep the meeting secret at a critical moment.



"He avoided media attention when the situation was most serious, and the risk of leakage about the parliamentarians' transition was too big," Elovaara said.

Police said that the man had traveled a few tens of meters in the back of the car, failing to use a safety belt. He had admitted the act to the police.

The road from the Prime Minister's residency has little traffic, and only the man was at risk of harm, the police said.

Len Norris



December 22, 1973

I accidentally glimpsed what my wife is giving me ... now I can't afford what I got her

Member News

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

Where Are They Now?

Joan McIntyre

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 Joan McIntyre, former MLA for West Vancouver - Garibaldi (2005-9) and West Vancouver - Sea to Sky (2009-13). She served as Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations.



1. What prompted you to seek public office?

As a political science graduate and professional opinion pollster, I had a lifelong interest and involvement in politics including serving as Chair of my local BC Liberal constituency association. My predecessor MLA Ted Nebbeling retired prior to the 2005 election leaving a vacuum. I had believed in and advocated for greater female representation in politics for many years, and when friends and associates encouraged me to put my name forward, I felt compelled to, in effect, put my money where my mouth was. I also believed that the BC Liberal government needed to show a softer face to retain power following the fiscal restraint of the preceding term.

2. Which political figure most influenced you?

Despite my lifelong interest in politics, I encountered the political figure who most inspired me after I was first elected MLA. At a meeting in Squamish, I was deeply impressed by then Lieutenant Governor Iona Campagnolo, specifically her exemplary career, including service as an MP from northern BC, and advocacy of non-partisanship and collaboration. I found this philosophy of immense guidance when working on issues in my riding and working with the NDP members as Chair of the Standing Committee on Children and Youth in my second term.

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

Understanding public opinion and policy issues in my marketing research career was a good precursor to political life. I was fortunate throughout my career in the private sector to have been my own boss, free to build and run my opinion polling business as I and my partner Evi Mustel saw fit. In Victoria as a backbench MLA, (save for one year in Intergovernmental Relations), I found myself a small cog in a big machine, and was given scant opportunity to influence provincial affairs. In contrast, it was rewarding and meaningful to deliver significant projects and benefits to my constituency communities ranging from the Lions Gate Hospital HOpe Centre (sic) for families facing mental health and addiction issues, to completion of the P3 Sea-to-Sky Highway, and to the successful hosting of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

4. What was your biggest challenge returning to private life?

At 64, I transitioned happily into retirement from my planned two terms as an MLA. I now find myself very pleased to be away from the stresses and the fray. I do have sympathy, however, for the difficulties some colleagues face when attempting to re-enter the work force years after leaving a career and professional development behind while engaged in public service.

On a personal note, one of my biggest challenges since moving back to Kitsilano has been fending off city folks who mistake me for the illustrious Joy MacPhail!

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

Echoing the inspiration I experienced from Iona Campagnolo, my biggest lesson in Victoria was how many good ideas and how much time and effort are lost through partisan failure to listen to or appreciate our opponents' criticisms and suggestions, no matter how constructive they may be. Sadly, we often lose opportunities both to enhance legislation and to make MLA committee work far more effective. Some of the shenanigans exhibited in QP are frankly embarrassing.

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

I still follow the evolution of political affairs and public opinion with great interest, but focus my active energy on less stressful pursuits such as acrylic painting that I took up three plus years ago, playing friendly bridge, and my travels to Europe where I now spend the late fall and winter away from the rain and grey skies. Board work seemed too similar to politics for my taste!

7. Finally ... pet projects? Hobbies? And, the value of remaining involved in the Association and OOTD.

I greatly appreciate the opportunities to meet and keep up with the news about other former 'recovering' provincial politicians. The experience of reflecting on my career for this profile has also been enjoyable and thought provoking. Thanks for the opportunity!

Letters

Dear Brian:

I always read OOTD and I particularly enjoy Jim Hume's pieces. The most recent issue contained a very moving remembrance of the bombing of Coventry Cathedral with a photograph of the charred cross.

My wife and I were there on a lovely late September morning earlier this year. I first visited Coventry in 1973 and the juxtaposition of the bombed ruins of the old church with the bold, striking modern church right beside it is a lasting memory from that long-ago trip. So, I was happy to find that it has all aged well, at least to my eyes. The modern church is still a stunning tribute to the resilience of faith, and the remains of the former church are still a stark reminder of why faith needs resilience to endure.

It was Freshers Week at Coventry University, the former polytechnic turned modern university that now dominates much of the town centre, and there were tables for student clubs set up on the plaza in front of the church, and on the floor of the old nave, with students walking around, and signs advertising the various clubs, and pop music in the air.

We took a turn into the corner where the charred cross (the replica, of course) still stands, with the remains of the bombed out windows behind it, and found a young couple dancing in the morning sunshine. Perhaps they were practicing for a show, or maybe they were about to try out for a Latin dance club, who knows? But it made for a marvellous scene, the old cross there in the background, a symbol of suffering, and the two dancers in front, seemingly oblivious to the history, caught up in the now.



I thought Jim might like to see a few pictures I took and I'm assuming you have a way of contacting him, so I've attached them to this email in the hope that you would forward them to him as an expression of gratitude for all his years of service to the craft of political journalism.

I look forward to future issues of OOTD.

Best wishes,
Geoff Plant



75 years ago

The Battle of Stalingrad ... WWII's bloodiest

Ask a historian to name the most consequential battle of World War II and you are likely to hear D-Day, the Battle of the Bulge or Iwo Jima. But the most consequential, and certainly the bloodiest, World War II battle was the Battle of Stalingrad.

In July 1942, Germany had Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic republics firmly under its control. But it desperately needed oil to keep its economy and military running. Hitler's solution to his predicament was to attack oil-rich areas in the southern Soviet Union.

At first, Stalingrad (known today as Volgograd) was a subsidiary objective, with one German general saying it is "no more than a name on a map to us." But, it soon became the main focus. The fighting initially went well for the Germans. They reached the city's center by late September, but their advance stalled.

One of the ironies of the war is that the German Sixth Army need not have got entangled in Stalingrad. Army Groups A and B were well on their way to the Caucasus in south-west Russia, when Hitler ordered an attack on Stalingrad. Some historians believe that Hitler ordered the taking of Stalingrad simply because of the name of the city and Hitler's hatred of Joseph Stalin. For the same reason Stalin ordered that the city had to be saved.

The primary task of the German commander of the Sixth Army, General Paulus, was to secure the oil fields in the Caucasus. Stalingrad was also an important target as it was Russia's centre of communications in the south as well as being a centre for manufacturing.

For simple reasons of morale, the Russians could not let this city fall. Likewise, the Russians could not let the Germans get hold of the oil fields in the Caucasus. Stalin's order was: "Not a step backwards."

The battle for the city was brutal. Individual streets were fought over in hand-to-hand combat. Areas captured by the Germans during the day, were re-taken by the Russians at night.

On November 19th, the Russians were in a position whereby they could launch a counter-offensive. Marshal Zhukov used six armies of one million men to surround the city. The attacking armies met up on November 23rd at Kalach with Stalingrad to the east. The bulk of the Sixth Army – some 250,000 to 300,000 men – trapped the Germans.

General Paulus could have broken out of this trap in the first stages of the attack but was forbidden from doing so by Hitler who ordered his troops to fight to the last man.

In February 1943, with their supplies and will exhausted, the Germans surrendered. With an estimated two million people killed, the battle was a turning point in the war. The German military never again won a significant battle in the east.

Volgograd commemorates the battle by renaming itself Stalingrad several times a year.

Volgograd, "Hero City," pays tribute to its war-torn past with its Alley of Heroes in the city center, a who's who of fallen soldiers and Red Army patriots. The Panorama Museum of the Battle of Stalingrad contains artifacts from the war, as well as a full panoramic view of the defeat of the German forces in Stalingrad.

