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Her Honour

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

Thank You and Miscellany

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Penny Priddy, Surrey
Joan Sawicki, Hagensborg

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

Or emailed to ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com
or ootd@shaw.ca

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

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From the Editor's Desk

Happy holidays readers! This year our greetings are tempered by our troubled awareness that many fellow British Columbians are suffering greatly from the ravages of the recent floods and landslides – disasters exacerbated by the stress of the lingering pandemic. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

This final 2021 newsletter has something for everyone: Year-end greetings from His Honour Speaker Raj Chouhan and from the extended AFMLABC/OOTD family, news updates from the Legislature, analysis of Canada's young leaders on the eve of the annual BC Youth Parliament, and special seasonal messages from our Old Islander Jim Hume and OOTD Production Chief Rob Lee.

As many of you know, Jim will be 98 on Dec. 27th and he continues to write with clarity and a depth of historical perspective that is humbling to edit. As he often does, in this issue, Jim leafs back through the dusty archives to extract vignettes that remind us we must learn from our history to avoid repeating it. I'm sure many of our former MLAs have Jim Hume stories begging to be told. Send them along – ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com – and I'll make sure they are featured in the Winter issue of OOTD. Copy deadline for that issue will be on or about Jan. 15th.

Every December issue, Rob Lee generates a fun page of Christmas puzzles, and this year is no exception. As well, he has penned a cautionary tale fitting for a period in our lives when civility, grace and good humour are so essential and, too often, in short supply. A footnote: Without Rob, there would be no Orders of the Day. Merry Christmas, my friend.

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.

The President's Report

As we approach the Christmas season and the advent of a New Year, it gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect on the bygone year.

In 2021, we were confronted by numerous challenges in British Columbia: drought, floods, forest fires, and of course, the ongoing saga of COVID-19. Let us remember those whose lives were lost to COVID-19 and those whose lives were upended by fires and floods. Let us also remember those who are dealing with ongoing challenges such as addictions and other health concerns. Our thoughts are with Premier John Horgan as he battles his latest health challenge. We wish him a full and speedy recovery.

It is also true that British Columbia remains an enviable place to call home. We are privileged to live in a place of unfettered opportunity, limitless prospects, and almost unimaginable potential. As British Columbians continue to work together to build on the legacies of the past, I have no doubt our future will continue to be very positive.

I encourage everyone to reach out to those who may need a hand-up or an encouraging word during this holiday season. In the spirit of Christmas, let's remember to be generous and kind to all our fellow citizens.

To all friends, members and supporters of the AFMLABC, from my family to yours, Merry Christmas and all the best in 2022!



John Les,
President, AFMLABC

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A message from His Honour Speaker Raj Chouhan

Optimism with a gradual return to normal at the Leg.

The year 2021 has proven to be a busy one as we continue to navigate through a global pandemic. There have been many ups and downs this year, and we need to adapt for everyone's safety constantly. However, there is a feeling of optimism as things gradually return to normal.

This year in the Legislature, we started our Spring Session with a hybrid model with minimal members in the chambers and the rest participating virtually. I am so grateful to the Legislative Assembly staff who made this new modern version of the sessions possible.

At the start of our Fall Session in October, we returned to mostly in-person sessions in the chamber. The Legislature is starting to feel more normal with a buzz of people in the hallways and chambers.

This May, in our effort to contribute to a welcoming outdoor environment, we installed a basketball hoop near the Armouries building. Visitors, community members, Legislative Assembly staff, MLAs, and media have been using the new hoop. Many friendly games of basketball have been popping up regularly.



Another milestone is the resumption of inside tours of the precinct and welcoming visitors back to the public galleries. The parliamentary tours team has welcomed small groups of masked visitors and maintained physical distancing measures. It has been great to see the public back in the House again.



This year the Knowledge Totem Pole was restored on the precinct grounds. The restoration work was performed by Doug August Sr. of Coast Salish Designs, who oversaw a team of two carvers. The work was done under a tent on the front west driveway. The tent had windows to allow staff and visitors to observe the restoration work in progress. The Knowledge Totem Pole is now back to its original location.

Over the past five months, hundreds of memorial items were placed on the front steps of the Legislature to honour the memory of the Indigenous children whose remains were uncovered in unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools. Items included shoes, stuffed toys, and other tokens of remembrance.

With the guidance of local Indigenous communities and the help of Lou-ann Neel, the Curator of Indigenous Collections at the Royal BC Museum, items were recently moved and donated to local families and children in need. Some items will be added to the Royal BC Museum's Indigenous Collections. Others will be repurposed for a forthcoming indoor and outdoor weather-protected display at the Parliament Buildings.

A sacred burning will be held for items made of natural materials that could not be salvaged. With the plans in place to transition from a temporary memorial to an enduring installation, we will continue to honour the memory of those Indigenous children who did not return home.

As we get ready to close the chapter on 2021 and welcome the New Year with all its possibilities, I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and joyous holiday season and a happy 2022.

Santa's AFMLABC mailbag

Christmas memories make for a warm, snug quilt

As the season approaches, I remember Christmases Past (apologies to Charles Dickens) and wonder what new memories we will create this year. I think of memories as pieces of a virtual quilt stitched together to wrap around us and keep us warm.

One of the memories that I reflect on each year is the Christmas of 1965. I was working as a nurse on a toddler surgical unit at Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, where most of the children were a very long way from home. They knew about Santa but were anxious about how he would find them and whether there was a chimney for St. Nick to come down.

In the early evening, we helped the children hang stockings on the end of their cribs. After they went to sleep, we nurses went around to each crib and filled their stockings with toys. I think how incongruous we must have looked, Santa's elves in starched white rustling uniforms and caps. In the morning, when the children awoke to see their stockings full, it mattered not what the elves had looked like. It mattered only that Santa had found them.

Since that Christmas Eve in 1965, I have had 56 more memories to add to my quilt. Each piece is different in size, texture and colour. They are all treasured, and they do keep me warm.

Penny Priddy,
Director, AFMLABC
(with Robert)



Perspective: A tough 2021 is still better than 1921

The year 2021 is just about done, and another edition, 2022, is just around the corner. This year certainly brought its challenges, but also many positive things.

For perspective, I think if I'd had a choice, I'd rather have lived in the year 2021 than 1921. When we talk about challenges today, we often forget that those who came before us had their challenges too, without all the modern conveniences and technologies we take for granted today.

Although challenges such as COVID-19 are worrying, it's also unprecedented that effective vaccines were available within a year of the outbreak. Compare that to 1921, when penicillin had not yet been discovered!

So, as we approach another New Year, let us not forget to appreciate how incredibly fortunate we are to live where we do, at this particular time in history.

Will there be more challenges? Yes, for sure, and these challenges are not borne equally, so let's always remember to be mindful of those who are simply less fortunate.

In the coming year, there will be many things to celebrate and enjoy: Families, birthdays, graduations, births, career successes, and so much more. Many reasons to be optimistic and positive. Enjoy 2022!

John Les,
President, AFMLABC



continued next page

There is life after politics

Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas to all. As our photo shows, there is life after politics. No doubt this year has been difficult for many, but on balance, it's amazing how we've all managed to survive and live our lives in a reasonably normal manner.

From our house to yours, we hope this note finds you happy and healthy. Enjoy the season and all the best for a prosperous New Year.

Cheers,
Bruce Strachan,
Secretary, AFMLABC
(with Bev)



Changing societal tone in 2021 needs work

Depending on one's perspective, 2021 was certainly a year to remember or forget. For me, the past year continued the changing tone of civil and political discourse; it is cause for concern.

In a democracy, we pride ourselves on being able to agree to disagree, to hold differing views and still be collegial. However, that is increasingly becoming the exception, not the rule. That is why I am hopeful that this association can be a positive example, showing citizens from different political backgrounds how they can work together to improve the state of political conversation.

As former MLAs, we have much to offer our respective communities. This holiday season and into 2022, let's focus our association on finding ways to participate, to mentor how to speak about complex issues respectfully, and to actively listen to one another. To demonstrate that it can be "all of us together" – not just "you are either for us or against us."

The need for this outreach has never been greater; let's do our part to make things a little better in 2022. Happy holidays!

Jeff Bray,
Past President, AFMLABC
(with Tabitha)



Greetings from a Hugh Curtis Fund cheerleader

It is good to end the year thinking that Canada navigated well through a difficult 2021. Congratulations to those who helped make OOTD a success despite the mask-wearing, border lockdowns and a fourth wave of the epidemic. OOTD continued to be published, thanks to Brian, Rob and contributors to OOTD.

I appreciated the November issue's highlighted coverage of the British Columbia Youth Parliament. The affiliation with the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund is particularly gratifying, and I know we are all pleased to see the robust growth in the size of the fund to over \$38,000.

I suspect I have become a cheerleader for the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund and its connection to the Youth Parliament through my association with the Victoria Foundation. I hope the growth in the fund will continue well into the future.

The November issue had interesting letters to the editor on Jim Hume's article about Winston Churchill's leadership during World War II. Jim suggested that in the war against COVID-19, today's leaders could take a leaf from Churchill's book.

And speaking of books, I highly recommend Erik Larson's *The Splendid and the Vile*, a look at Britain, especially London, during the Blitz. If you have not yet read it, the picture it paints of the dread of the German bombers on a moonlight night is intriguing. Larson's depictions of the bombers from Britain going the other way into Germany puts a thought-provoking take on the horrors of war. A good read for the Christmas break.

Merry Christmas and all good wishes for 2022, with no more pandemics!

Joan Barton,
Honourary Member, AFMLABC



continued next page

“We're in this together” ... not a cliché on Sumas Prairie

I write this as an Abbotsford resident – and former local MLA – overwhelmed by the devastation caused by the recent flooding on Sumas Prairie and the resulting impact on hundreds of residents and their family farms. It is unprecedented.

Evacuations have been a necessity, but it is understandable that many farmers have decided to remain, hoping to save some of their livelihood.

Mayor Henry Braun has done an excellent job of communicating with residents, updating them regularly. He is providing stable and caring leadership. And we are all grateful for the dedication of the military, police, fire, city staff and many volunteers.

The Christmas season is upon us and, for many, it will be a time of appreciation for all the efforts made to mitigate the effects of the flooding, but for others, it will be a time of genuine despondency. Many families have lost their homes and their sustenance. It will be difficult for them to find any joy at this time of the year.

I would encourage anyone not affected to contact our local Salvation Army – where I volunteer – and donate. Abbotsford Community Services – now operating under the name Archway – has the food bank and I'm sure they would also appreciate any financial support.

“We're all in this together” is a cliché, I know, but somehow it seems particularly relevant at this time. I believe this tragedy will cause us to realize that our sense of community is much larger than we have ever realized.

Simon Gibson,
OOTD contributor, AFMLABC member



Grateful to stay connected with OOTD

Holiday greetings and very best wishes for 2022 to all who read this edition of OOTD! May you and your families enjoy the holiday spirit and all the season brings.

I'm grateful to be part of the OOTD team. It's a way that I can stay connected with the unique atmosphere of the Parliament Buildings that you're all familiar with. And a way that I can honour the institutions and the people who have worked there.

This year, my “trigger” for the start-up of the festive season was watching the big crane truck and its crew putting up the lights on the tree in front of the Leg.

Thanksgiving is also a trigger for my festive season. It reminds me to count our many blessings and be grateful for all we have. Feelings of gratitude and goodwill flow into the festive season, inspire hope, and re-fuel us for the New Year!

COVID has forced all of us to dial down the hustle and bustle and focus on the truly important things in our lives. So, this message wishes each of you a superb holiday with your family and friends. May the bells jingle!

Irwin Henderson,
OOTD editorial committee member.



Holiday Diversions answers (from Page 14)

Holiday Movie Quiz
1942-E, 1946-H, 1947-I, 1951-B, 1965-A, 1967-G, 1983-C,
1989-J, 1990-F, 1994-L, 2003-D, 2004-K
A (true) Christmas Story - according to IMDb, all the
statements are true.
Christmas Scramble: MERRY, SKATE, CUDDLE, WINTER
Answer: I'm dreaming of a white Christmas but if it runs out
I'll drink the red.

BC's Parliamentary Practice fifth edition goes digital

By Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Regular readers of *Orders of the Day* will know that a new edition of *Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia* was released in 2020. The fifth edition includes updated procedures and precedents and is organized into 18 thematic chapters featuring full-colour photographs, easy navigation, and a detailed index.

A free online version of *Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia* is also available.

A new website (<https://ppbc.leg.bc.ca>) features the entire content that makes up the book's fifth edition. This online resource will help users easily search and navigate this procedural authority used in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The website will enable all users to understand better how the Legislative Assembly operates procedurally and undertakes its parliamentary work.

I was honoured to edit and oversee the production of the fifth edition with the dedicated research and writing assistance of Artour Sogomonian, Susan Sourial and Ron Wall. The new online version was brought to life by a talented team in Hansard Services led by Dan Kerr and comprised of Betsy Gray, Pamela Holmes, Julie McClung and Patrick Stobbe.



Numerous colleagues from many departments of the Legislative Assembly also proudly contributed to this project, and I am grateful for the contributions of each individual recognized in the Acknowledgements section.

It is our shared hope that this digital edition, the first to be freely available online, will contribute to further transparency, accessibility, appreciation and understanding of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia and the vital work of its elected Members. We hope that former Members will also enjoy this new digital resource and look forward to receiving their comments and feedback.

Softcover print copies of the fifth edition of *Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia* continue to be available for sale from the Parliamentary Gift Shop in the Parliament Buildings. Please drop by the Gift Shop or contact GiftShop@leg.bc.ca or phone 250-356-8295 for further information.

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Parliamentary Practice has evolved ... hands-on to online

The fifth edition of *Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia* builds on the foundational work of E. George MacMinn, recounts Ian Izard, legislature law clerk and clerk assistant from 1977-2012.

MacMinn, who served as a table officer of the Legislature for 54 years and clerk of the Legislative Assembly from 1993 to 2011, authored the first four editions of the book. This new edition captures 12 years of developments in parliamentary practice in British Columbia.

“George MacMinn used a hands-on approach, doing his own research and consulting with other authorities and associates in the Commonwealth. He was a consultant to the Procedure Reform Committee that recommended numerous changes to the Standing Orders in 1985,” Izard recalls.

Clerk Kate Ryan-Lloyd says the Legislative Assembly has been described as “a practical or business-oriented institution with respect to procedural matters.” *Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia* is evidence of this approach, focusing on the Legislative Assembly's Standing Orders, their application and interpretation, and the experience of other legislative bodies with similar rules.

The fifth edition differs from earlier editions that were organized numerically by Standing Order. The fifth edition is organized thematically with the Standing Orders, Practice Recommendations and pertinent excerpts from statutes featured throughout the supporting text. Content and commentary are significantly expanded, including new text on the roles and work of Members, the foundational elements of parliamentary procedure, voting and divisions, the legislative process, financial procedures, and parliamentary privilege.

While the Legislative Assembly's procedural operations are the focus of this book, there is also some insight into the administrative operations of the Assembly and the machinery that supports the work of elected representatives and the democratic institution of Parliament. More comprehensive content, numbered sections, callouts with key information, an improved index and a modern design are hallmarks of this edition. “It is my hope that these elements make the content more user-friendly and accessible to Members and all British Columbians,” the clerk says.



*Hon. Raj Chouhan, Speaker, and Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, hosted the new online *Parliamentary Practice* celebration in October.*

British Columbia marked 150 years as a province in 2021. The Standing Orders that have governed the Legislative Assembly's proceedings have been updated over the years to reflect the modernization of parliamentary practice and meet Members' expectations and changing social values.

“Fundamentally, the Standing Orders have enabled the Legislative Assembly to conduct its work in an effective, organized manner. They allow the government of the day to carry out its agenda while also allowing the Opposition to fulfill its important scrutiny role,” Ryan-Lloyd says.

Since the publication of the last edition of this book in 2008, various Sessional Orders have been adopted, and several Standing Orders have been amended or added. Examples include modification of the daily sitting times, a provision that infants in the care of a Member are permitted on the floor of the House, and a new Order that solidifies Speakers' directives on the use of electronic devices during parliamentary proceedings.

This edition also reflects changes in parliamentary practice, most of which derive from Speakers' decisions on the application of the Assembly's rules and procedures. The spirit of cross-party consultation continues to influence the Legislative Assembly's practices and operations, particularly since the 2017 provincial general election that resulted in the first minority Parliament in British Columbia in over 60 years.

Ryan-Lloyd says: “As Editor of the fifth edition, I trust that it will continue to serve as a useful reference tool for Members, Table Officers and staff. It is also my hope that this edition will contribute to an understanding of how the Legislative Assembly operates. The online availability of this book is a step toward ensuring greater accessibility to this public institution, which is of importance to all British Columbians.”

Canadians under 40 believe the future requires a new start

For many young Canadian leaders, starting over is preferred to building on the foundations provided by previous generations.

A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute conducted in partnership with Cardus finds a plurality of leaders aged 18-29 (47 per cent) and 30-40 (40 per cent) believe that the future development of Canadian society requires beginning anew and restructuring differently.

By employing a model of leadership that focuses on both personality traits and engagement with societal issues, this study was able to explore the priorities of Canadian leaders across generations.

This preference for structural change is reflected in a generational divide on existing and potential legacies. When asked about the legacy of the Baby Boomers, over half of those between the ages of 18 and 40 qualified it as negative – with a quarter of younger leaders saying it was very negative.

When it comes to the hypothetical legacy of the Millennial generation, the inverse is true. Half of those aged 41 and older say that what the Millennials leave behind will be worse than that of the Baby Boomers, with only between one-fifth and one-third saying it will be positive.

There are significant differences at play, but there is also much that unites leaders of all generations. A majority believe in working for the common good (66-77 per cent) and hold a strong belief that individuals can make a difference (86-96 per cent).

This study adopted two primary analytical lenses to understand better Canada's challenges and how different generations perceive them: leadership and age.

On the first point, respondents were asked a series of psychographic questions designed to get at qualities related to leadership identified in existing literature, such as ambition or the ability to handle stressful situations. Respondents were assigned a score, with those who received the highest scores designated as leaders.

The second analytical lens, age, opens the possibility of examining shifting trends in leadership across generations. Age cohorts are used here instead of generation labels when referring to the survey results, recognizing that generational definitions are contested.

With that being said, who are the leaders emerging from this model? Broadly defined, they are those who are most likely to have an impact on the lived experiences of others through their actions. They are decision-makers. They are active in their communities through volunteering and political involvement and are informed on the issues of the day.



The highest-scoring members of the leadership index make up about three-in-10 of the whole sample and approximately one-quarter to one-third of their respective age cohorts.

Echoing the increasing diversity of Canada, younger generations of leaders are far more diverse than older ones, with one-in-five (20 per cent) 18- to 29-year-old leaders identifying as a visible minority and three-in-ten (28 per cent) identifying as LGBTQ2+.

When it comes to geographic and gender distributions, leaders are relatively evenly spread out across Canada and between genders. In addition to sharing a bundle of similar psychographic traits, leaders profess to prioritize the common good. On average, leaders believe the common good should be society's higher priority over individual rights and freedoms more so than their peers of the same age.

In addition to being more likely to say that they prioritize the common good, leaders share a strong belief in the ability of an individual to affect change in the world. From a low of 86 per cent among 18- to 29-year-olds to a high of 96 per cent among those aged 65 and over, leaders overwhelmingly see the possibility for individuals to make a difference in the world around them.

By contrast, a significant segment of society does not see room for individuals to affect change – effectively foreclosing this as a possibility. Of note, younger generations, both leaders and their counterparts are more likely to hold this view.

What are the most significant challenges facing Canada, and where do the leaders of today and tomorrow stand on these issues? Climate change is the top concern for all age cohorts, regardless of whether they are leaders or not.

When it comes to Indigenous issues and reconciliation, leaders are more likely than others in their cohort to be concerned. Canadians' focus on Indigenous issues spiked in the summer after confirmation of the graves of 215 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential school site in May but has since declined.

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With rising government spending due to the COVID-19 pandemic contributing to increasing inflation in the country, older Canadians, and non-leaders especially, are concerned about balancing the budget. For younger Canadians and leaders, in particular, economic inequality and housing prices are a greater concern.

While climate change is selected as a pressing concern by majorities of all generations of leaders, economic growth factors into the top five for each of them. When presented with a direct trade-off on what Canada should prioritize, some generations are more split than others. Two in five 41- to 54-year-old leaders believe economic growth should be emphasized over environmental protection, a rate double that of the youngest leaders.

Leaders are much more concerned about Indigenous issues than their peers, peaking at two-in-five (39 per cent) 30- to 40-year-olds who rank reconciliation as a pressing issue that the country needs to address in the next decade.

This is reflected in how important the two groups feel reconciliation is to them personally. While at least seven-in-10 of all respondents say reconciliation is important, non-leaders are more likely to say it isn't important to them personally. At least half of all leaders say it is "very important."

Leaders, especially those 40 and under, are also much more likely to believe white people benefit from societal advantages visible minorities do not have. While this is the view of two-thirds (63 per cent) of Canadians, three-quarters of 18- to 29-year-old (76 per cent) and 30- to 40-year-old (78 per cent) leaders say this, a rate at least 10-points higher than their age cohort.

If it is an aphorism to say it is possible to learn much about the path forward by examining the past, it must be noted that how the past is perceived is inherently contested. To this point, how the legacy of the Baby Boomers is perceived differs dramatically depending on who you ask – did they save the world, or did they ruin it?

Those aged 55 to 64 and 65 and older hold overwhelmingly positive views, with between three-quarters (75 per cent) to nine-in-10 (87 per cent) rating the Boomers' legacy as positive. Although still mainly positive, there is a noticeable downward shift in perceptions among 41- to 54-year-olds. Perceptions of the Boomers' legacy fall even further among those 40 and under where a majority qualify it as negative – including roughly a quarter who say it's very negative.

Except for those aged 65 and older, leaders are, on average, more skeptical than the rest of society about the Boomers' legacy.

Perceptions are reversed when looking at the speculative future legacy of Millennials. Over half of respondents from younger generations believe that what the Millennials will leave behind will be more positive than that of the Boomers. This image flips when looking at those over the age of 40, with half instead saying that the Millennial generation will leave things in worse shape than what they inherited.

If leaders were more negatively disposed towards the bequest of the Baby Boomers, they remain more hopeful for the future. With the exception of those 65 and older, all leaders are more optimistic about the legacy of the Millennials than the rest of society.

Echoing the radically different interpretations of generational legacies, it would appear there is a sizeable appetite for structural change. Half (47 per cent) of 18- to 29-year-old and two-in-five (40 per cent) 30- to 40-year-old leaders say that the future development of Canadian society will require starting anew. In contrast, those 55 and older prefer a society built on the foundations of previous generations.

(The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from July 26 – Aug. 2, 2021, among a representative randomized sample of 4,094 Canadian adults who are members of Angus Reid Forum.)



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HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES



1905: Ah Chu is jailed as Victoria celebrates Christmas

By Jim Hume
The Old Islander

It was a few weeks before Christmas when “Ah Chu, a Chinese gaunt and sallow with opium,” was sentenced to three months imprisonment for the theft of two sticks of cordwood, valued at 10 cents, from the woodpile of J.E. Painter on the corner of Cormorant and Store Streets in Victoria.

Constable Andrew Woods testified he had found “Ah Chu sneaking into a Chinatown's Alley with the two sticks and promptly arrested him.”

In the 1905 *Daily Colonist* report on the trial, there is no mention of Ah Chu entering a plea – or of any evidence given on his behalf. There was just a brief recitation of prosecution facts: Theft of two sticks of wood valued at 10 cents. The Victoria policeman's statement, then the verdict – “Guilty as charged” and the sentence – three months in jail.

In the early 1900s, Victoria was on the edge of great things, but acceptance of people not white and of British stock was not high on the city's priority list.

In 1904, Robert Pim Butchart had taken up residence out Brentwood way, and by 1905 his wife had commenced her life work of creating the now world-renowned Butchart Gardens. Francis Rattenbury was supervising the emergence of the Empress Hotel from Inner Harbour mudflats – it opened in 1908 – while engaging in an ugly public spat with the Royal Jubilee Hospital Board over an unpaid \$348 invoice “for services rendered.”

The Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway was planning to build a branch line from Duncan to Alberni via the Cowichan Valley and cross the island from east to west from Englishman's River “to the Alberni Canal.”

The city was rolling into a new century, boisterously progressive under the sometimes-arrogant leadership of British Empire builders who saw themselves as benevolent dispensers of justice to educate the natives and any others lacking British blue blood, thus inferior by birth.



Ah Chu's home for the holidays ... three months prison for stolen sticks of firewood.

Among the perfect Christmas gifts for women “of quality” were new-fangled electric lights. “Give the wife the greatest of gifts,” the newspaper adverts cried: “Relieve her of the trouble of cleaning and trimming lamps.”

There were cheaper ways to brighten a housewife's day. The Bole Drug Company offered Gin Pills. “Each pill possesses all the curative qualities of one and a half ounces of the best Holland gin. As a cure for kidney trouble, they have all the good qualities of gin with none of the bad.” The pills were 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 with a money-back guarantee “if the gin pills do not cure.”

Many things have changed since Christmas 100-plus years ago, and some haven't changed at all. A pre-Christmas *Colonist* editorial lamented: “There is nothing that we eat or drink or wear or take as medicine (these days) that is not subject to adulteration of some kind.”

And there was a fierce continuing debate on a provincial proposal to licence all firearms – except those owned by farmers – to bring weapons ownership under control. With only minor adjustments, adulterated food and gun control remain bothersome issues today.

Raw though the city was in many ways, there was a striving for cultural respectability. Christmas entertainment choices in 1905 ranged from serious

continued next page

theatre to vaudeville with the added attraction of “illustrated songs with moving pictures” to recitals in the Metropolitan Church of Elijah – “featuring Mr. Watkin Mills' great English quintet.” The Arion Club was singing at the Institute Hall to a standing room only “audience fully capable of appreciating the high standard maintained throughout the program which was punctuated throughout by outbursts of spontaneous applause.”

On Christmas Eve, the *Colonist* proudly boasted: “Christmas festivities throughout the city tomorrow will include all the public institutions, a plentiful supply of good cheer being provided to make all the inmates happy.” The inmates included hospital patients, children in “the Protestant Orphanage,” residents of the “Old Ladies Home” – and Ah Chu and his fellow prisoners.

Most institutional celebrations called for good times to be had by all but with a heavy dose of Christian piety. The Daughters of Pity laboured hard to bring joy to hospitals with special attention “in a manner appropriate to the occasion” to patients unable to leave their beds. The Women's Christian Temperance Union organized other parties and the Ancient Order of United Workmen, a Masonic-based organization now defunct, entertained “several hundred children in Victoria Hall.”

There were to be livelier celebrations. The navy planned to issue extra rum rations at Esquimalt and the Garrison at Work Point would celebrate in the good old style ... “with plenty to eat and lots to drink ... the celebration (could) continue for several days.” But only, the *Colonist* solemnly pronounced, after Christmas morning church parade at St. Saviour's Church “when Rev. C. E. Cooper will deliver an appropriate sermon.”

Ah Chu would be among “the unfortunates who are confined in the provincial jail and city lock-up ... also remembered,” the *Colonist* reported. “Jail Warden Mutter has made elaborate preparations for the event, and those who are confined at that place will be made to feel that they are remembered and will make their Christmas as happy as their surroundings permit.”

With more than two months still to go on his firewood theft sentence, Ah Chu would be among the prisoners offered “boiled mutton chops, French fried



Santa and his elves spread good cheer on the harbour front, early 1900s.

potatoes, coffee and milk” for breakfast. For midday dinner, the menu was “Porter's prime roast beef with brown gravy, vegetables, boiled onions, white sauce, cabbage, Topaz parsnips and mashed potatoes” followed by: “English plum-pudding with vanilla sauce” and dessert, “Bellflower apples, Japanese oranges, nuts and candies.”

Jailhouse tea that evening would consist of “Lipton's best tea with milk, Smith's best white bread with butter, blackcurrant and strawberry jam.”

There was no word on how Ah Chu and others like him fared on English roast beef and Topaz parsnips. However, the *Colonist* reported carol singing at most of the institutional celebrations. Maybe among the carols would have been a rousing rendition of Good King Wenceslas with Warden Mutter and the judge who sentenced Ah Chu piously singing “Brightly shone the moon that night, Though the frost was cruel, When a poor man came in sight, Gathering winter fuel.”

Ah, well, it was a long time ago. Today, we would never tolerate the injustice visited on Ah Chu or countenance any racial discrimination for that matter. Or do we? Take stock of your recent acts of kindness and understanding before answering.

(Jim Hume – who will celebrate his 98th birthday this month – is still blogging weekly at <https://jimhume.ca/>.)

HOLIDAY DIVERSIONS

Answers on
bottom of Page 7

Holiday Movie Quiz

by Rob Lee

'Tis the season for holiday movies! Match the titles of the following popular films with the year of release.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| A. A Charlie Brown Christmas | 1942 | _____ |
| B. A Christmas Carol (Alistair Sim) | 1946 | _____ |
| C. A Christmas Story | 1947 | _____ |
| D. Elf | 1951 | _____ |
| E. Holiday Inn | 1965 | _____ |
| F. Home Alone | 1967 | _____ |
| G. How the Grinch Stole Christmas (anim.) | 1983 | _____ |
| H. It's a Wonderful Life | 1989 | _____ |
| I. Miracle on 34th Street (Edmund Gwenn) | 1990 | _____ |
| J. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation | 1994 | _____ |
| K. The Polar Express | 2003 | _____ |
| L. The Santa Clause | 2004 | _____ |

A (true) Christmas Story?

A Christmas Story has become a fixture on many top ten holiday movie lists. Read the following statements about the movie and determine how many are true.



According to director Bob Clark, Jack Nicholson was given the script and was very much interested in the role of Mr. Parker, "The Old Man".

The family eats meatloaf, red cabbage, and mashed potatoes for dinner every night except for Christmas Day.

The movie is set in Hammond, Indiana, but was filmed mainly in Cleveland, Ohio. Some scenes were filmed in Toronto, Ontario.

Jean Shepherd's book "In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash", which the film is partly based on, is a collection of short stories that Shepherd wrote for "Playboy" magazine during the 1960s.

Christmas Scramble

Unscramble these four clues,
one letter to each square,
to form four reindeer names

by Rob Lee

RYMER
□ □ ○ ○ □

KETAS
□ ○ □ □ □

DECLUD
□ □ ○ ○ □ □

ENWRIT
□ ○ ○ □ □ □



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Ans: □ ○ □ □ □ □ **THE** □ ○ □ □

Holiday Humour

I'm trying to get into the Christmas spirit, but I can't get the bottle open.

If a telemarketer calls, give your phone to your 3 year-old and tell them it's Santa Claus.

Always jingle -all- the way. No one likes a half-assed jingler.

Lie under the Christmas tree to remind your family that you're the true holiday gift.

No matter how much you eat during the holidays, your earrings will still fit.

Don't let common courtesy become an oxymoron

By Rob Lee
OOTD Production Chief

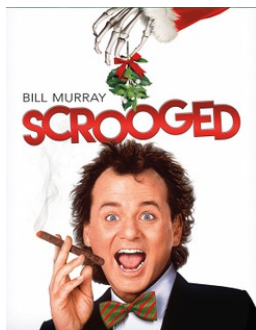
I love wordplay. For years we have had a letterboard in our home, displaying a weekly humorous (and sometimes salty) message. In July of last year, I put up a sign in our yard, next to a public path, that featured a daily message to help bring some joy to passersby in an otherwise sombre time. The first sign posted was, "I've got to practice some social distancing from the fridge." The total number of messages is now over 500 unique sayings.

Puns, double entendres – I research them all to post on the sign. I appreciate a good oxymoron as well. They used to be fun and light-hearted: Military intelligence, jumbo shrimp, awfully nice. With the rise of tribalism and social division in the world, the more popular oxymorons have become darker: United States, racial equality. I am fearful that the next popular oxymoron will be common courtesy.

This time of year brings another one of my loves – holiday movies. From *It's a Wonderful Life* to *Last Christmas* (and even Hallmark Christmas movies), I watch as many as I can. We have a number of movies that we watch every year, leading up to our tradition of viewing *A Christmas Story* on Christmas Eve. Most of these films leave me feeling warm and fuzzy; I admit, some do leave me cringing.

With all that we have gone through, I'm reminded of the (somewhat flawed) retelling of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in the 1988 film *Scrooged*. Frank Cross, a cynical television executive played by Bill Murray, is visited by his versions of three Christmas ghosts. He realizes the error of his ways and delivers a frenzied speech to a live viewing audience. Below is an excerpt:

"It's Christmas Eve! It's the one night of the year when we all act a little nicer; we smile a little easier, we cheer a little more. For a couple of hours out of the whole year, we are the people that we always hoped we would be. It's a miracle. It's really a sort of a miracle.



"There are people who are having trouble making their miracle happen. There are people who don't have enough to eat or people who are cold. You can go out and say hello to these people. You can take an old blanket out of the closet and say 'Here!' you can make them a sandwich and say 'Oh, by the way, here!'

"I get it now! And if you give, then it can happen, then the miracle can happen to you! It's not just the poor and the hungry; it's everybody who's gotta have this miracle! And it can happen tonight for all of you! If you believe in this spirit thing, the miracle will happen, and then you'll want it to happen again tomorrow.

"You won't be one of these b*stards who says 'Christmas is once a year and it's a fraud,' it's NOT! It can happen every day; you've just got to want that feeling. And if you like it and you want it, you'll get greedy for it! You'll want it every day of your life, and it can happen to you! I believe in it now! I believe it's going to happen to me now! I'm ready for it! And it's great. It's a good feeling; it's really better than I've felt in a long time. I'm ready. Have a Merry Christmas, everybody."

Frank Cross got it right. Despite our differences, we must strive to treat each other a little nicer every day of the year. Let's not let common courtesy become the next oxymoron.

As I finished writing this piece, southwestern BC was hit by the devastating floods from the atmospheric river. Amid the tragic loss of lives, homes and livelihoods, empty store shelves, and long lineups for gasoline, I have had many positive encounters with people exhibiting patience and respect. It was gratifying.

A look back to '96:

Epic snowstorm buries Victoria and the Mainland

By Jill Slattery, Global News

When some Victoria-area residents opened their front doors 25 years ago this month, they were greeted by a wall of snow as tall as a small child.

It was the height of a blizzard that meteorologists at Environment Canada called the "Storm of the Century." Almost 124 centimetres of snow fell that month in Victoria, with 65 centimetres coming down in 24 hours on Sunday, Dec. 29th.

Many on the West Coast had never seen anything like it. Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island were virtually shut down. Cars were buried under several feet of snow. Highway 1 was closed, transit was paralyzed, airports were all but closed, and the army had been called in.

Even a Vancouver Canucks game against the San Jose Sharks was cancelled; however, a Broadway production of *Cats* at Queen Elizabeth Theatre went ahead as planned.

Then NDP MLA for Vancouver-Kensington, Ujjal Dosanjh, said: "We're doing everything short of actually declaring a state of emergency. We've talked to the military; they've indicated 100-plus personnel could be utilized."

Meanwhile, high winds and blowing snow stranded hundreds of motorists in the Fraser Valley, with some stuck in their cars for as long as 17 hours before rescuers reached them. Cheryl Tolsma, then 27 years old, ended up entertaining 89 of those stranded drivers over that weekend.

"When the police officer came to our door, he said probably around 50 people would be coming, and we said 'okay, we'll deal with that,' but they just kept coming and coming and coming," Tolsma said in an interview with BCTV at the time.

Some 300 more spent the night in an Abbotsford church. Elsewhere in the Fraser Valley, a barn roof collapsed under the weight of snow, killing and injuring dozens of cows.

But it was southern Vancouver Island that was hardest hit by the snow. The Victoria area received almost twice as much snow as Vancouver, with 95 centimetres falling between Dec. 27th and Dec. 29th.

The weight of the snow mixed with rain on Dec. 30th caused the roof of an airplane hangar to collapse at Victoria International Airport, destroying several airplanes and putting 80 employees out of work.



Global TV's Legislative Bureau Chief Keith Baldrey recalled the eerie tranquillity of Victoria during the storm. "The most memorable part of that storm was how quiet Victoria had suddenly become," Baldrey said. "There was no vehicle noise because streets were impassable for at least two or three days. The only noise you could hear was from a colony of California sea lions that had set up home on nearby Trial Island. Their barks were very loud and constant, which sounded surreal."

"Neighbourhoods turned into alpine villages, where everyone either skied or towed sleds everywhere. The streets had shrunk to become narrow paths down the middle of the road. And everyone was in a very good mood since few people went to work and most simply played or hiked in the snow. A wonderful time!"

Meteorologist Mark Madryga, working as a forecaster with Environment Canada and BCTV then, also vividly remembers the storm. He watched as an "incredible amount of moisture" came up from the southwest and combined with bitterly cold Arctic air to create the "Perfect Snowstorm."

"There was no doubt we'd be hit extremely hard," Madryga said.

The accumulation piled on top of an existing layer of snow from previous storms, reaching historic levels. By the night of the 29th, the air warmed and created freezing rain by Monday morning.

All in all, during December that year, Chilliwack received 169.9 centimetres of snow, Victoria 123.9 centimetres, Vancouver 80.7 centimetres, and Abbotsford 77.8 centimetres.