

BCYP goes virtual again, but so resilient

By Megan Ryan-Lloyd,
BCYP Minister of Public Relations

Youth aged 16 to 21 from across British Columbia gathered virtually for the 93rd session of the British Columbia Youth Parliament (BCYP) from December 27 to 31.

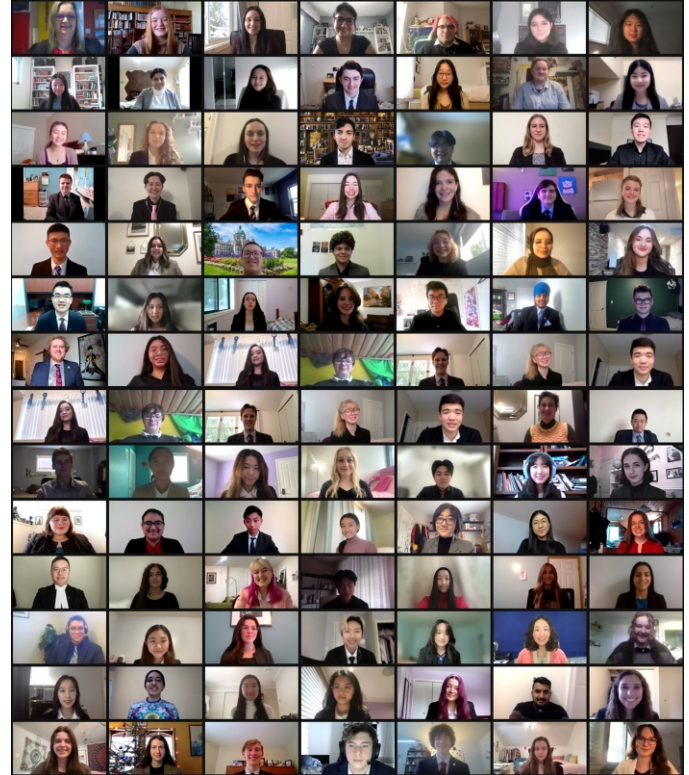
Instead of taking time to relax during the Christmas holidays, these 97 young community leaders spent their time participating in an opportunity to learn about parliamentary procedure and the importance of community service.

After the 92nd BCYP sat virtually last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, plans were well underway for a return to an in-person session at the Parliament Buildings this year. However, due to updated Public Health Orders issued just before the holidays, the event was moved online with a week to spare. While very disappointed not to be gathering in person, the youth understood a virtual session is the best way to keep themselves and their communities safe.

Premier Kishoore Ramanathan said: "Built upon the values of service, education, community, collaboration, and leadership, BCYP draws youth together through a variety of projects. While we were disappointed not to be gathering in the Legislative Chamber, we were committed to providing a very positive experience for our members and charted our plans for the year ahead."

BCYP is a non-partisan, youth-led community service-focused organization founded in 1924. Every year, BCYP members meet to propose and debate new projects and plans for the upcoming year.

Our annual BCYP projects include running Regional Youth Parliaments around the province. These regional events teach high school students about parliamentary democracy and procedure. In this session, the Minister of Parliamentary Education, Amelia Brooker, tabled BCYP's "Annual Education Plan." This report describes learning outcomes for these regional youth parliaments and BCYP's



Megan Ryan-Lloyd



Kishoore Ramanathan

annual session. The other key project run by BCYP is Camp Phoenix, a sleep-away summer camp for kids who would not otherwise be able to attend summer camp, commonly due to financial or social reasons.

In addition to these service projects, the House passed three more significant projects in their Service, Education and Volunteering Act (SEVA.)

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Her Honour

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

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Thank you to **Telus** for renewing advertising in *Orders of the Day*. We appreciate this organization's ongoing support of this publication.

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

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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.

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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

One of the core legislated responsibilities of the AFMLABC is "to serve the public interest by providing non-partisan support for the parliamentary system of government in British Columbia." One of the critical endeavours on that path is the association's financial and moral support offered to participants in the BC Youth Parliament – students actively engaged in the exercise of generating their own model of good governance – and through scholarships for UNBC and UVIC students studying to embark on careers in public service. This Winter issue of OOTD is a glowing report card (Pages 1, 4, 5, and 14) of how those initiatives are paying important educational and good governance dividends.

We have a lot of great local content in this issue.

Thanks to former Premier Mike Harcourt for his review on Page 13 of Robert A. J. McDonald's new BC political history, *A Long Way To Paradise*; and to former MLA and municipal councillor Simon Gibson for his well-written Pages 8 and 9 "Politics 101" comparison of public service in our towns and cities with the more partisan version in the Legislature.

Thanks as well to former MLA and cabinet minister Graham Bruce for his thoughtful letter on Page 15 raising the alarm about an assault on democratic values most prevalent right now in the U.S. Readers should consider his challenging invitation: "As an organization of mainly retired politicians, would the AFMLABC be an appropriate body to start this discussion?"

A must-read is BC Green Party Leader Sonia Furstenu's Page 12 piece on being forced to find new Cowichan Valley constituency offices because of disruptive anti-vaxxers. She reminds us as we navigate through this challenging and troubling pandemic to remember that "our community is shaped by each and every one of us, and our choices have very real consequences for other people."

In the December issue, I mentioned that our resident columnist Jim Hume would turn 98 over the holidays. That prompted Bennett-era public servant and '60s-era *Edmonton Journal* scribe Dave Laundry to celebrate all that is Hume with a stroll down an ink-stained memory lane, Page 6. And, that prompted me to dust off an old column about Hume that I wrote for *The Province* newspaper in the '90s, Page 7. Together they make fun reading.

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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.

The President's Report

Well, here we are ... 2022 is underway with all its unknowns and yet-to-be-experienced adventures. What will this year bring us? Only time will tell, but with the challenges we already know about, it will be an "interesting" year.

Once again, our editorial staff have assembled a wonderful edition of OOTD, containing much-appreciated contributions from members and other friends.

There is no doubt that each of our members has interesting stories to tell, both from the time they were in elected office to the years since during which they've likely developed a certain perspective.

I would again encourage more contributions from our members, some of whom are great writers and storytellers. As a retired Member of the Legislature, I always find it interesting to hear from former colleagues. Some have gone on to interesting post-political exploits. It's always good to hear how former members are doing.

I know that several members have migrated to warmer climes for the winter. Let's hear from some of you as to your favourite winter (or summer) destinations, whether for a few weeks or a few months. What holiday destinations have been your favourites, and why? Just a few ideas to stimulate a quick column in OOTD.

Here at home, it's good to hear the BC Youth Parliament was a great success. We continue to provide financial support annually to this important initiative to stimulate young people's interest in, and possible future involvement with, the political affairs of our province.

Enjoy this issue, and please, let's hear from you!

John Les,
President, AFMLABC



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Continued from Page 1

BCYP session highlights collective passion

By Megan Ryan-Lloyd,
BCYP Minister of Public Relations

The other acts passed by the House included the Camp Phoenix Act, Parliamentary Activities Act, Supply Act, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, and Ministerial Responsibilities Amendment Act. While these pieces of legislation are still subject to Senate approval (BCYP's board of directors), having these bills passed in the House signals commitment and support for these significant initiatives.

Members also discussed social issues through Private Members Resolutions. Topics included gender-discriminatory pricing in hair salons and mandatory education on Asian history. These debates allowed youth to engage with peers on a range of issues and hear opinions from all sides.

As per other years, we had the traditional awards and some new awards. The Parliamentarian of the Year Award went to Zara Herbert and Christina Kim. This award is given to members of the previous session who have contributed the most in all three areas of BCYP, including attending or organizing BCYP events, individual and group service, and fundraising.

The Inspiring New Member award for second-year members who made exceptional contributions to BCYP's projects during their first year was given to Anna Hulbert

and Maryam Aboukhatwa. The (Monica) Fisi Award for Service was awarded to Marika Leigh, a parliamentarian who has shown exemplary dedication to serving the youth of British Columbia through non-BCYP service projects as well as BCYP-organized events. Finally, the Bond Shield, awarded to the parliamentarian who raised the most money for BCYP in the last Parliament, went to Jessana Akehurst.

During this new session, House Leaders for next year's 94th Parliament were elected. The Premier-elect is Abby Head, a UBC student from Powell River. Nathan Chang will be Leader of the Opposition-elect; he is another UBC student from Richmond. Our new Deputy Speaker-elect is Jessana Akehurst, a McGill Student from Delta.

This session also celebrated seven ageing-out members. These long-serving members have turned 21. There was much sadness saying farewell and thanking these remarkable colleagues. All things considered, our second online session of BCYP again highlighted our collective passion, resiliency, and drive. We hope to return for a second sitting of Parliament in the spring, but plans are in the air as we move forward into 2022. Cabinet and members of the House alike are excited to get to work on our service projects, and all in all, the virtual sitting of the 93rd BCYP was one to remember.

BCYP Speech from the Throne

Members have a duty to “turn adversity into opportunity”

By MLA Grace Lore
Honourary Lieutenant Governor

I open with an acknowledgement that while we gather virtually, each of us is attending this meeting on the traditional territories and unceded lands of Indigenous peoples of British Columbia. We are grateful for the enduring wisdom of these nations and thank them for so generously sharing their rich history and culture with our communities. I encourage each of us to actively consider our personal roles and actions in support of reconciliation. Each of us should reflect on how we can enhance our individual relationship to the land we are on.

We meet during a time of great uncertainty. We appear to be approaching a new wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. During such times, we face important choices as individuals

and as a community – choices to support one another, serve our communities and be civil and respectful, and reflect on the values that have kept our communities strong and safe: respect, kindness and collaboration.

BCYP is built on these values. Our organization is founded on service, education, community, collaboration and leadership. It is through these values that youth join together in a variety of projects. My government is committed to moving forward planning new service activities to further BCYP's efforts as a service organization. This work may not be easy, but it is necessary and essential to who we are.

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Prorogation: A week of rebuilding in a year of uncertainty

This has been a week of rebuilding after a year of uncertainty. Despite being unable to gather in the BC Parliament Buildings and having to convert to a virtual session after the new guidelines were announced a week before the opening ceremonies, we as an organization had to revert to a way for 97 young leaders to come together.

Despite the restrictions that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had on organizing and executing the typical activities we engage in for the past 22 months, we as a membership have been innovative in how we can fulfill our motto of “Youth Serving Youth.”

Despite interacting with parliamentary procedure for the first time, members have been brave enough to engage and learn. Most importantly, despite all of the challenges and the uncertainties that arose moments before session began, members this week have exemplified the spirit of service as they agreed to bring back the fully-formed Camp Phoenix, allow for the return of in-person Regional Youth Parliaments in the late spring, and the newly enacted projects under the Community Development and Parliamentary Education Branch.

As you have learned this week, the British Columbia Youth Parliament is an organization like no other. Everything we have discussed and approved is not just an empty means to learn about our democratic institutions. It is a demonstration of the power of your voice and a commitment to yourself and to your fellow members that you will use it to serve your community.

Session is only the beginning, and as we move into this year and work to carry out the legislation we have enacted, I want you to know that it may not be easy. It shouldn't be. Nothing worth doing is. And when you are seeking to fulfill the highest commitment there is, service to your fellow human beings, it is almost certain that there will be times of doubt and challenges that may arise.

From Camp Phoenix, to Peek into Parliament, to the Intra-Provincial Service Project, to the Municipal Service Councils, to Regional Youth Parliaments, to Fundraisers, and to Regional Events; as members of the British Columbia Youth Parliament, it is your duty to turn adversity into opportunity. It is important to “say what you mean, mean what you say and do what you said you would do.”



MLA Grace Lore

However, you are not alone. You are supported by my government, by the opposition, by fellow members, and by the entire community of people who have been a part of this organization. So, in times of darkness and even the coldest winters, know that you are here because you are a leader, and you have the talents, drive, and support to rise from the ashes.

Thank you, members!

On a personal note, MLA Lore added: “I wish you a bright new year, one that shines more brightly on all of us and one that treats us all a little more gently. I also thank you for your work this week, for your service and commitment to your community, and encourage you to continue to show up for one another, for the places you call home, and for our province. You showed this week that you can do this, even when it means pivoting, involves challenges and disappointment, and when distance makes those relationships harder and that learning curve harder. And yet, here you are. My sincere gratitude and congratulations.”

(Grace Lore was elected as the MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill in 2020. She is the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity and is a member of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services and the Special Committee to Reform the Police Act.)



Jim Hume: A first class reporter still going strong at 98

By Dave Laundy

I have probably known Jim Hume longer than anyone around the BC Legislature. He was my boss at the *Edmonton Journal* when – a fresh-faced 21-year-old Victoria graduate of the Ryerson School of Journalism in Toronto – I arrived in the Alberta capital in the summer of 1963.

Jim was Assistant City Editor and put in charge of the stable of young university students from various campuses who had been recruited by Managing Editor Andrew Snaddon to give new life and youth to the revitalized paper. The prevailing wisdom among the seasoned reporters was that all of us “ivory tower” kids needed to learn about the “real world” of newspapering.

Jim was the right guy for the job. We all gathered in a small space off the newsroom to be instructed in the ways of the *Journal*. His approach was a dose of reality mixed with humour. On one occasion, he told a rather sanctimonious young woman that if she neither drank, smoked nor dated men that “you’ll never make it in this business.” It was said with a smile but did reflect how things were in the crusty world of newspapering in the 1960s. How times have changed, and all of us as well!

Later, Jim was sent to the Alberta Legislature as senior reporter and, for a while, I was his assistant. A great learning experience. One story I remember particularly was when Jim learned that the rather straight-laced Social Credit MLAs were to have a secret showing of the movie *Tom Jones*, which the government had banned from the provincial theatres. Jim stationed himself outside the room to ask embarrassed MLAs what they thought of this sexy movie which fellow Albertans had been forbidden from seeing. Exposing hypocrisy in the halls of power. Jim saw it as a journalistic duty.

Two decades later, Jim was dean of the Legislative Press Gallery in Victoria when I arrived to run Premier Bill Bennett’s Government Information Services (GIS), which the Hume parlance had nicknamed the “Glow Worms.” (The premier, in a candid moment, had admitted GIS at times had “a political glow.”) Jim was welcoming to me, always fair and usually objective, keeping his professional distance. A nice balancing act, reflective of Jim’s approach to reporting and column writing.

It is an honour to know and to have learned from Jim – a friend to this day and a first-class reporter, still going strong at 98.



2022 Member Dues and OOTD subscriptions are due!

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

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The “Legend of Jim Hume” by his enduring fan

By Brian Kieran
(Writing in *The Province* in 1994)

VICTORIA – Back in the spring of 1967, I secured a degree in journalism from one of those eastern country-club universities and headed west to do some serious newspapering.

The *Edmonton Journal* took me on at \$95 a week and assigned me to the police beat.



Much depressed, I spent my first months watching cops pull bodies from the North Saskatchewan River and phoning widows to get photographs of drunken husbands who died in flaming car wrecks.

Sensing I needed encouragement, a few of the senior hands took me to Nick's Bar on Jasper Avenue one day to inspire me with yarns about the Legends of the Newsroom.

In those days, the biggest Legend was a guy named Jim Hume, who had worked at the *Journal* in the early 1960s and in '67, was writing for the *Victoria Times*.

In 1963, Hume had been hot on the scent of scandal in the government of Premier Ernest Manning. His investigative journalism had contributed to the resignation of Alberta Treasurer E. W. Hinman, and the next victim in his sights was Municipal Affairs Minister Alfred Hooke.

One night, Hume talked Hooke into a clandestine meeting at the South Bend Motel in Edmonton, where he confronted the politician with allegations about shady real estate deals. Hooke was a tough nut and refused to cave in, so Hume finally told him he had 24 hours to smarten up or he'd print what he had. Manning was furious. At an emergency cabinet meeting later that same night, the premier, who was also the attorney general, got the wheels of government in motion to have Hume charged with blackmail.

Sensing that Hume was about to be hunted down and possibly thrown in jail, the *Journal's* senior editors stashed him in an Edmonton hotel for two nights and

then smuggled him out of the province on a midnight bus to Penticton. In fact, charges were never laid nor seriously contemplated. However, the *Journal's* lawyer spent a couple of hours grilling Hume, photocopied his notebook and secured the original in the office safe.

It was three weeks before things cooled enough to allow him to return home.

In the 1970s, I worked for a number of small dailies in BC and, just about everywhere I went, Hume had been before me. I missed him by five years at the *Penticton Herald*, but the dust was still settling from his Okanagan exploits. It was the same at the *Nanaimo Free Press*.

When my journeys in journalism finally brought me to the Legislative Press Gallery here in Victoria in 1980, Hume was sitting at his desk and enjoying the status of “gallery dean.” He didn't know me from Adam, but I felt as if we were old acquaintances.

Last night (April 13, 1994), we threw a rather large party for Hume to mark his semi-retirement from the *Victoria Times-Colonist* at the tender age of 70, to celebrate his contributions to our craft and to roast him royally. More than 125 friends attended, from Premier Mike Harcourt across life's spectrum to Hume's barber, Gus Papaloukas.

Over the years, Hume has remained fiercely independent with regard to his membership in the gallery.

Those who have seen the gallery as a vehicle for pack journalism; those who have sought legitimacy under its umbrella; and those who have attempted to turn it into a professional ethics committee have never had Hume as an ally.

But, not even Hume would deny that the gallery has become more than the sum of its parts. It has a reputation as one of the toughest legislative watchdogs in the country – just ask the many politicians who have felt the sting of its members.

Besides his independence, Hume has contributed his enduring respect for parliamentary process, his refusal to suffer fools gladly and his healthy skepticism.

It was my honour last night to present Hume with his life membership key to the Press Gallery.

Scratch an MLA and you'll probably find local DNA

By Simon Gibson

A significant number of MLAs – on both sides of the House – can trace their political DNA to local governments, municipal councils and, occasionally, school boards.

In my case, I served many terms on Abbotsford Council – and Matsqui Council before that – prior to amalgamation in 1995. I subsequently completed two terms as an MLA.

People will sometimes ask me if there are substantial differences between the life of a councillor – or mayor – and that of an MLA. My answer is yes, which I think largely reflects the views of other former and current MLAs.

Perhaps the most profound difference is the independence generally enjoyed by a civic politician. While there may be exceptions, especially given the rise of parties in many Metro Vancouver communities, for most of BC's 160 municipalities, there is freedom for individual council members to vote as they see fit on a particular issue.

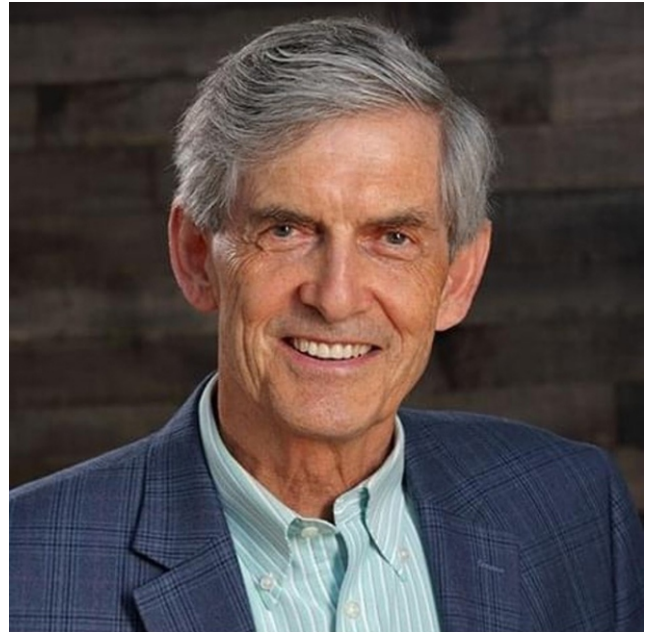
This independence can be limited to some extent by the desire to support colleagues or concur with a recommendation of the mayor, for example. However, there is no obligation to do so, and “voting one's conscience” is always a valid option.

The views of constituents can impact voting at the council table. Some council members may be persuaded that a proposal or development is not in the best interests of a particular neighbourhood.

Others may respect the “bigger picture” and the guidelines of the municipality's community plan in voting in support of a proposal. The result may be a “split vote.”

In the case of my community, I have seen a number of controversial developments and policy initiatives approved by a single vote. There can be a level of suspense as each council member expresses their view one by one.

On the other hand, an MLA – with a few exceptions – serving under a partisan banner will be constrained in voting in the legislature. It is extremely uncommon for a member to publicly vote against their party, as most past and present MLAs know.



Simon Gibson

Votes will be taken and recorded in Hansard, of course, but these are mainly ceremonial and predicable. MLAs will nearly always demonstrate solidarity with their party.

The party whip – as the title implies – is supposedly the enforcer of strict voting along party lines. It was my experience, though, that they are generally more interested in ensuring that members are present in sufficient numbers for a particular vote.

The nature of decision-making is noticeably distinct in both levels of government. Members will concede that decisions are never made in the legislature but simply ratified there. While there is animated discussion and often intemperate language, no one is persuaded.

In local government, current and former MLAs will acknowledge that virtually every decision is made in public. The exceptions are logical and defensible: personnel issues, legal matters and property purchases.

I suppose it is obvious, but the capacity to effect change or influence policy is quite dissimilar in both levels of government. An Opposition MLA – as I discovered – has little impact on policy and has minimal opportunity to engage with a minister and other officials. On the other hand, a government backbench (not in cabinet) MLA – as I also discovered – is valued for their views and can “network” with relative ease with ministers and others.

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A councillor is one of only a handful of elected representatives – from four to 10 (not including the mayor) – so there can be ample opportunity to speak to an issue and even persuade other members of council who are experiencing ambivalence. (Individual councillors are generally discouraged from directing staff or pursuing a matter without the authority of council.)

The “constituency” of a civic politician is the entire community, as we don’t have a ward system in BC. I recall receiving hundreds of calls, messages and emails over the years from every part of the city.

The MLA, in contrast, represents a distinct geographic area, an electoral district (riding) and is one of 87 members.

The “physical presence” of a civic politician – excluding the mayor – can be limited to a shared office at the municipal hall. In the case of smaller communities, they are expected to work out of a home office.

MLAs are expected to maintain an office – often a “storefront” – that provides a visible setting for

constituency work. Funding is provided for offices, staffing and various supplies and technology.

The additional responsibilities of an MLA can include serving on a number of committees and boards. Government MLAs may be appointed to cabinet and Treasury Board, for example.

Civic politicians may also serve on committees, mostly local, and sometimes on regional district boards. (As a councillor, it was a privilege for me to serve on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities board.)

I suspect past and present members could probably add to my list, but these points represent some of the more obvious differences between the lives and duties of provincial and municipal politicians.

(Simon Gibson was elected in 2013 to represent Abbotsford-Mission for the BC Liberals. He served two terms. Before his election, Gibson was a member of Abbotsford City Council for more than 30 years.)

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Issues Canadians will need to watch in 2022

While much of the world feels like it's in a COVID-19-induced holding pattern, key issues continue to shape and shift Canadians and their country. From the team at the non-profit Angus Reid Institute, here are issues to watch in 2022. COVID-19 and its variants will continue to be intertwined into all other issues affecting Canadians. It's the umbrella casting shade over all other stories and is therefore not mentioned as its own item to watch. We've all been watching it for a long, long time.

How do governments respond to the pressing issue of climate change?

How do governments respond to the threat of climate change after a year of unprecedented weather disasters across the country and around the world?

A record-breaking heatwave in the Pacific Northwest claimed the lives of hundreds of people and led to mass casualty events among marine animals. Wildfires ravaged much of the world, including in British Columbia, where the town of Lytton was devastated by the eponymously named wildfire. Parts of the globe also experienced record-breaking precipitation, which inundated metro systems in China, caused extensive flooding across Germany and Belgium, and led to what may be Canada's most expensive climate disaster in BC.

Climate change has consistently been a top issue across the country this year. Despite the implosion of the federal Green Party, concerns over the environment and climate change played an important role in the country's national election in 2021. Observers noted that this was the first election in which all (elected) parties brought serious climate plans to the table, with climate modelling experts vetting both the incumbent Liberal and the Conservative proposals.

Shortly after winning another minority government that looked much the same as the last, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a climate action plan at the COP26 summit in Glasgow. The plan includes commitments to phase out thermal coal by no later than 2030, help developing countries transition to green energy alternatives through a contribution of up to \$1 billion, and capping and reducing pollution from the oil and gas sector to net-zero by 2050.

Before the election, Trudeau's government committed Canada to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. It will require a significant effort to green the country's energy production and consumption. How – and at what cost – remains to be seen.



Wildfires ravaged much of the world, including in British Columbia.

Canada's – and Trudeau's – record on environmental policy is spotty at best. A November environment commissioner's report detailed three decades during which the government failed to translate talk into action, notably highlighting that Canada has the worst record among G7 countries for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases since 2015. A majority of Canadians want more from Trudeau: 52 per cent said in November his governments have not done enough to address climate change while 30 per cent said he's done too much.

Inflation and mortgages squeeze Canadian households

The Bank of Canada's policy is to keep inflation steady at between one and three per cent as measured by increases to the consumer price index, which tracks the overall cost of living in Canada. For eight straight months, the CPI has risen above that rate. In October and November, inflation was 4.7 per cent, the highest it had been since February 2003. Canadians have struggled with the rising costs. In October, four-in-five said their income had not kept pace with the rising cost of groceries. This year, it's expected to get worse: the Canada Food Price Report estimates the average family of four's grocery bill will increase by \$1,000 in 2022.

A rise in the cost of groceries, gasoline and other staple goods has coincided with a continued climb in housing prices. Some Canadians were able to turn pandemic savings into down payments, accelerating a rise in home prices that have now increased 375 per cent nationwide in the last two decades. And the trend is expected to continue in 2022. High housing prices have divided Canadians into three groups: the haves (40 per cent) who want the boom to continue lifting their assets, the have-nots (39 per cent) who hope for the market to tank so they can get in, and the status quo (21 per cent) who don't mind prices staying right where they are.

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Combined, the home buying boom and inflation leave financial policymakers in a tough spot. The Bank of Canada has indicated that it plans to consider raising lending rates halfway through 2022, but it faces increasing pressure from Canadians outpaced by the rising cost of living to act sooner. However, any rise in rates threatens the financial situation of Canadians sitting on debt and loans – especially mortgages. Indeed, in October, more than half (53 per cent) of Canadians believed an interest rate hike of two percentage points would have a negative impact on their household finances, including one-in-five (22 per cent) who believed it would be significantly damaging.

The shifting dynamics of work

A pandemic-provoked labour market shift finds companies needing to accommodate a workforce that has become accustomed to the flexibility of working from home.

In March 2020, companies moved formerly deskbound employees out of the office and into their homes as a temporary measure to limit social interactions and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The short-term health protocol provoked a sea change, shifting the labour market as many employees took their laptops home and have yet to return.

According to Statistics Canada, as of August 2021, one-fifth of Canadian workers work from home, a decline from the April 2020 high of two-fifths but a significant jump from the 3.6 per cent of workers in 2016.

While part of the shift to working from home is a function of businesses recognizing that workers can be as productive or more at home than in the office, it also is a company concession to employee preferences. In August, ARI found 44 per cent of those who currently worked at home and preferred to continue doing so said they would quit immediately or start looking for a new job if they were called back into the office.

China and Canada – what now?

Internationally, Canada's relationship with China is under an increasingly bright spotlight.

The Sino-Canadian relationship has seen more downs than ups over the last year. Trade with China increased during the pandemic, but diplomatic relations have been turbulent. Following the arrest of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou in 2018 by Canadian authorities at the behest of the United States, Beijing arrested two Canadians – Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor – in response and tried them for



Many in our workforce like the flexibility of working from home.

espionage. This action led to a precipitous decline in public perceptions of China, which only reversed – slightly – following the Michaels' release.

More recently, relations have been rocked by Canada's decision to follow in the footsteps of the U.S., U.K., and Australia and implement a diplomatic boycott of the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing – a move that a majority of Canadians supported, but Chinese officials dismissed as a farce. While most Canadian athletes will compete in Beijing, noticeably absent will be NHL players who, as was recently announced by the league, will not be attending due to the surge in COVID-19 cases.

How the Sino-Canadian relationship evolves in 2022 remains to be seen. Canada still needs to decide whether to ban Canadian companies from buying Huawei equipment to construct 5G networks, a move China's ambassador said would send "a very wrong signal." Though Canadians want Canada to prioritize human rights over business concerns in its relationship with China, data suggests that Canadians worry the economic costs of taking a stand against China may be too great.

Anti-vaxxers force MLA to move constituency office

By Sonia Furstenuau
Cowichan Valley MLA and BC Green Party leader
(Writing in the *Cowichan Valley Citizen*)

It was with sadness that I gave notice to the Matraea Centre manager (in Duncan), letting her know that we will be moving our constituency office out of the building and finding a new location. We have loved being in the Matraea Centre, working alongside people dedicated to the health and well-being of our community.

As we look for a new location for the constituency office, staff will continue to serve people remotely and can be reached by phone (250-715-2792) and email sonia.furstenuau.MLA@leg.bc.ca. As soon as we find a new location, we will provide an update here and on our website.

There has been a significant increase in interactions in our constituency office that have left people feeling uncomfortable or unsafe in their workplace. As the Matraea Centre has a common space shared with other service and health care providers, it is not fair to the others in the building to have their workplaces disrupted by individuals or groups who are not acting in a respectful manner.

Recently, a group of people opposed to COVID public health measures entered that shared space, and when they were informed that neither I nor my staff were on-site, they chose to continue to disrupt the other people in the area. I had recommended earlier that day to my constituency staff that they work at home because of an unrelated incident that made me concerned for their safety.

Hearing about the disturbance and distress caused by the group who came into the Matraea Centre was when I decided that we need to find a location in which people coming to our office will not be disrupting or disturbing others. It has also become clear that we need additional security measures in place so that constituency staff can feel safe at work.

A constituency office is, first and foremost, a place for people to reach out to if they are having a challenge with accessing a provincial service or if they need support as they navigate provincial services. This can include help with how to access services, guidance for application processes, or support when services aren't meeting a person's needs. It is a non-partisan office – the staff are there to serve any constituents who need help or assistance.

Our office has served people with a wide range of issues, from helping to secure housing to providing support with WorkSafeBC claims to helping small businesses



MLA Sonia Furstenuau

navigate COVID supports. The constituency assistants approach each case with kindness and care, and they do everything they can to help people who come to us. In the past year, staff have worked on well over 200 files for constituents.

In providing this assistance, they should never be expected to tolerate abusive or aggressive behaviour, yet this is unfortunately becoming more common.

We are all living through incredibly challenging times. Two years of a global pandemic, worsening impacts from climate change, growing inequality that makes the housing crisis even worse – the toll on people's physical and mental health from these overlapping crises is enormous. And, at the same time, we see incredible acts of kindness and generosity every day in our community and the commitment that so many people have to helping others and to serve.

Each of us makes choices all the time, and our choices affect those around us. A word of kindness, of appreciation, lending a hand to help – these small things can make an enormous difference in another person's life. And we must also remember that an angry reaction or response, a moment of unkindness, can have a terrible toll on another person.

As we navigate more uncertainty, let's remember that our community is shaped by each and every one of us, and our choices have very real consequences for other people.

A Long Way to Paradise - easy-to-read, splendidly-researched

(Editor's note: The political landscape of BC has been characterized by divisiveness since Confederation. Outsized personalities from Amor De Cosmos to W.A.C. Bennett dominated the halls of power while militant radicals and reformers took to the streets. *A Long Way to Paradise* traces the evolution of political ideas and explores the province's journey to socio-political maturity.)

By Mike Harcourt

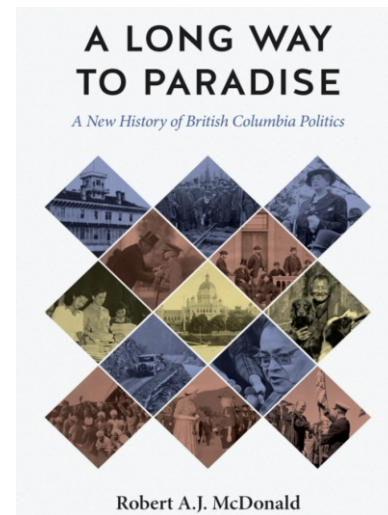
I was honoured to provide a jacket cover review of UBC historian Robert McDonald's new book *A Long Way to Paradise – A New History of British Columbia Politics*.

I wrote: “Dr. McDonald's new book on BC politics is a brilliant analysis of the province's political clashes, from Confederation in 1871 to 1972's W.A.C. Bennett defeat. It nails the eternal battle in BC between individual-focused free-enterprise liberalism and community-focused political populism. A must-read!”

Orders of the Day readers looking at Dr. McDonald's easy-to-read, splendidly-researched journey through these 100 years of BC politics will receive fresh insights into how difficult governing BC has been and still is.

Those insights include:

- The fears of British businessmen and mine and railway workers of being out-voted and losing work to aboriginals and Asians in the 1870 to 1890s;
- The role of patronage, railroads and taxes – particularly resource taxes, and ideas like Henry George's single tax;
- The transition from clusters of candidates around individual leaders to party politics, with the Richard McBride Conservative's election majority in 1903 and his 12 years of “booster capitalism;”
- The John Oliver Liberal period, 1916-28, a time of political reform, public service and social reform, merit-based hiring, and rapid expansion of education, health and social services;
- The 1930s to 1940s rise of the left through the CCF, plus the internal CCF battle between the Marxist Socialists (Eric and Harold Winch, Lyle Telford, Dorothy Steeves) and the Fabian socialist/social democrat supporters (Grace and Angus McGinnis, Daisy and Arnold Webster);
- The start in the 1940s of coalitions to “keep the socialist hordes away from power;”



- The rise and fall of the most impactful premier in BC history – W.A.C. Bennett, 1952-72;
- The social democratic NDP entering the gates of power with Dave Barrett as leader and premier, 1972-1975.

After reading Robert McDonald's *A Long Way to Paradise*, OOTD subscribers might want to consider how much each of our political leaders moved BC closer to paradise. This will be an interesting exercise, as BC is probably the only province that has the potential and capacity to dream of, and plan for, paradise – a long way off, or not.

Here are a few more reviews:

This magnum opus provides an in-depth history of politics in the first 100 years of provincial history. In the rich detail and insights gleaned from McDonald's years of teaching generations of students at UBC, we find the roots of British Columbia's reputation as a fractious, polarized, difficult-to-govern province that is sometimes as hard on its premiers as it is on segments of the electorate. – **Vaughn Palmer, provincial affairs political columnist, Vancouver Sun**

In his remarkable final gift to us, *A Long Way to Paradise*, Bob McDonald takes on the daunting challenge of assessing the political ideas that shaped BC's first century and beyond – and succeeds admirably. – **George Abbott, public policy consultant and former British Columbia cabinet minister**

A Long Way to Paradise represents a stunning breadth and depth of primary research. The result is first-rate. – **Steve Penfold, associate professor, Department of History, University of Toronto**

(The author, Bob McDonald, died in 2019. He had retired from teaching in 2012 and was in the final stages of finishing this book when he died.)

UNBC student grateful for help from AFMLABC

By Daniel Hunter-Owega
Political Science, UNBC

Thank you for your generous contribution to my education. My name is Daniel Hunter-Owega, and I have lived in Williams Lake for many years.

Currently, I am studying Political Science at UNBC. I am hoping to pursue post-graduate education once I receive my degree, and I hope to use it to serve the needs of British Columbian society. A solid university education is such an essential part of personal development. It provides the tools for students to make a better future for everyone. I only hope that I can make the most of the opportunities provided to me to make as much positive impact as possible.

I have lived in BC for most of my life and consider myself very fortunate. My childhood was spent in the Rocky Mountains, while my young-adult life was in the Cariboo. My experiences growing up in these places were extremely influential in helping me to choose political science as my area of study. As a child, I was a voracious reader of history and geopolitics. As a result, I have a keen interest in world events and have read the news ever since I figured out what an internet connection was.



Of course, it is much easier to do so today compared to when I was younger. We have come a long way from the rural dial-up internet of 2000. As I have continued to learn, I have been exposed to both the positive and negative events of history. This has caused me to value our democratic freedoms and respect the principles that form the foundation of our justice system.

A significant event worth mentioning was the wildfire season of 2017. I lived just north of Williams Lake, and my siblings and I were cut off from our home and family with little more than a few changes of clothes, phones, and a credit card. As it turned out, I wouldn't be allowed to return home for an entire month. This uncertainty gave birth to public policies that directly impacted our situation. As a result, I gained a deep appreciation for the concept of service, as I was highly reliant on the generosity of others just to make it through each day.

It reinforced my belief that true leadership is done in humble service to others, be it our fellow citizens or the nation as a whole. Thus, I chose to switch my major to political science and would later transfer to the University of Northern British Columbia. As of December 2021, I have finished my BA in Political Science.

Career-wise, I have often dreamed of becoming involved in policy making, even becoming a diplomat. Both seem like careers in which I can serve and positively impact both British Columbia and Canada. Of course, such career paths are difficult to get into and require considerable skill. Thus, I hope to continue my education in post-graduate studies to hone my skills and expertise further.

I also hope to learn from the legacies and advice of those who have already entered the field, so I can better prepare myself for my career and make wiser choices in service to my fellow Canadians. As such, I am mindful of the depth of skill and experience of those reading Orders of the Day, and hope that I can continue to learn from them, their expertise, and their wisdom.

Again, thank you so much for your generosity and support.

(A note from Tara Mayes, Development Officer – Donor Relations, UNBC: The AFMLABC is truly making a difference in the lives of students like Daniel. The scholarship fund has grown significantly, and this year will support two students with \$1,000 each.)



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For more on insurance brokers and the benefits they provide to B.C. families go to bcbroker.ca.

HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES



Letters

Just how fragile is democracy, and should we be concerned?

Dear Editor:

How fragile is our democracy? Does it need to be strengthened? Is democracy in decline worldwide? Should we be concerned?

On almost a daily basis, there is an article, commentary or new book concerning the stability of democracy. Do we take our democracy for granted? Are we sleepwalking into the abyss thinking that “they” will ensure all will be well and our democracy will remain in place?

The attacks on democratic norms in the United States are real, and we would be foolish to ignore the impact this can have on Canada. Is now a time to engage in a country-wide discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of our democracy in Canada?

Perhaps as a start, do members of the Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia share similar concerns regarding the health of our democracy? Several books that might help to inform our understanding of a healthy democracy and increase our awareness of subtle attacks on democracy norms include *Twilight of Democracy* by Anne Applebaum; *On Tyranny* by Timothy Snyder; *The Narrow Corridor* by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson; and *How Democracies Die* by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt.

“This is how democracies now die. Blatant dictatorship – in the form of fascism, communism, or military rule – has disappeared across much of the world. Military coups and other violent seizures of

power are rare. Most countries hold regular elections. Democracies still die but by different means. Since the end of the Cold War, most democratic breakdowns have been caused not by generals and soldiers but by elected governments themselves”... *How Democracies Die*.

“Because there is no single moment – no coup, declaration of martial law, or suspension of the constitution – in which the regime obviously 'crosses the line' into dictatorship, nothing may set off society's alarm bells ... Democracy's erosion is, for many, almost imperceptible” ... *How Democracies Die*.

Around the world and here in Canada, governments of all political persuasions have had to take unprecedented measures to fight COVID-19, treading on freedoms we have historically enjoyed. Considering this, along with the deepening political divide in the United States, it may be prudent for Canadian society to ensure our democracy is healthy and renewed.

As an organization of mainly retired politicians, would the AFMLABC be an appropriate body to start this discussion?

Graham Bruce
Former MLA,
Social Credit 1986 – 1991, BC Liberal 2001 – 2005

Please support BC Youth Parliament

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

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

By cheque: To the Victoria Foundation, #200 - 703 Broughton Street, Victoria, B.C., V8N 1E2. Cheque payable to The Victoria Foundation. Note the name of the fund in the memo line or in a cover letter.

Online: Go to www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca. Click on “Giving” in the navigation bar and then on “Make a Donation.” After that just follow the prompts to find the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund.

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

February 18, 1965

The Leduc Glacier avalanche killed 26 miners

In February 1965, heavy snowfalls followed early cold, dry weather. For several days before Feb. 18th, a great sub-arctic storm raged and an estimated 4.3 metres of snow fell at the Granduc Mine, 30 km northwest of Stewart, near the Alaska border.

The Leduc Camp of the copper mine was located on a moraine at the junction of the North and South Forks of the Leduc Glacier and was accessible only over glacier-covered terrain. In the camp proper, there were four bunkhouses, a recreation hall, warehouse, first-aid building and temporary hospital, a small helicopter hangar with workshop, and 10 smaller buildings. Between the camp and the portal, and at the portal itself, were a large power-house, a large workshop and new and old dry buildings.

At about 10 a.m. on the 18th, an avalanche destroyed the southern portion of the camp and the buildings surrounding the mine portal, not quite blocking the portal. After the avalanche, only the bunkhouses, mine office, warehouse, the first-aid building/hospital were left intact. Everything else was demolished.

Of the 154 men in the Leduc Camp, 68 were caught in the avalanche. The others were in buildings that were untouched or working in safe areas outside; 21 men were working underground. The men caught in the avalanche were shovelling roofs, bulldozing pathways, digging out equipment and working on construction and machinery in the area of the mine portal.

The avalanche destroyed the power plant, but the auxiliary power was connected to the radio transmitter within minutes, and a distress signal was sent to the Stewart mine office. Survivors at the site, including a doctor and first-aid attendant, began rescue operations immediately. At the time of the disaster, 15 men were working outside the portal, and all were buried. The mine shift boss, who had been on the surface just before, knew the approximate positions of all these men and set the underground crew working in the hope of uncovering survivors. All 15 were found relatively quickly; six were alive, but nine were dead on recovery.

As most survivors in the rest of the camp were in varying states of shock and injury, the rescue work was slow. Lack of proper equipment and the ongoing storm hampered operations. Using bare hands, shovels and makeshift equipment, 41 men were saved that day, the last one to come out alive five and a half hours after the slide.



Granduc mine under construction beside the Leduc Glacier.

The distress signal to Stewart was heard by the Alaska State Police, who immediately notified the RCMP in Prince Rupert. Mine officials in Stewart had operations well underway, arranging for a helicopter base to be set up and ground rescue to be initiated. As regular air access to the mine from Stewart was still impossible, a helicopter base was set up at the mouth of the Chikamin River on the Alaska side. Meanwhile, ground rescue teams had left by snowcat from the nearest road camp; it would take them three days to cover the rugged 55 km to the site.

The news reached the press almost immediately and brought aid from many quarters of British Columbia and Alaska. On Feb. 19th, the first helicopter reached the camp from the Chikamin River base after spending the night on a glacier between the two sites, forced down by weather. Further machines brought additional rescue personnel and trained rescue dogs, and an evacuation shuttle was established.

The search for survivors was greatly hampered by the mass of wreckage in the snow. Rescue dogs were confused by the maze of human scents. Probing turned up only more scattered material. Poor visibility, snow, fog, and wind continually hampered operations. The last body was recovered by mine personnel on 18 June – leaving 26 dead and 20 injured.

The Granduc disaster is the largest of its type in Canada since the Rogers Pass disaster of 1910. The camp was never reopened. No technology available could protect men working in that location against another avalanche.

Source: ExploreNorth