

Former MLA Patty Sahota taken suddenly at just 54



AFMLABC's perennial go-to photographer, John Yanyshyn, provided this springtime shot of the Legislature. The insert reminds us that Patty Sahota's tenure in the Precincts was brief, but her impact was lasting.

In mid-February, Kevin Falcon, Leader of BC United, issued this sombre statement: "I'm sorry to advise former MLAs that one of our colleagues has passed away suddenly.

"Patty Sahota passed away quite unexpectedly in her sleep at the young age of 54. We will miss her.

"Patty was the Liberal MLA representing Burnaby-Edmonds from 2001 to 2005. Towards the latter part of her term, she was appointed Minister of State for Resort Development.

"Patty was born in India and raised in Merritt. Patty was actively involved in the community, serving on the board of Simon Fraser University and Westminster Savings Credit Union, to name just a couple of examples.

"She worked with her extended family's home-building business and the parent mill and timber company in her later years.

"For those of us who crossed her path, we will forever remember her bright smile and optimistic view of life.

"She was always viewed as a colleague who stayed strong even while we made the difficult decisions necessary to turn the economy around in those early years in government. That dedication to doing what was right – not what was easy – likely resulted in her subsequent election loss, and yet she never complained."

For more on Patty's life, turn to Page 5.

Endowment funds support AFMLABC scholarships

Our two university endowment agreements with UVic and UNBC provide for four undergraduate scholarships, where possible, one male and one female recipient at each university, for students who have graduated from a BC secondary school.

AFMLABC Membership Chair Ken Jones reminds us that between 1991 and 1996, members of the Association of Ex-MLAs of BC (now the Association of Former MLAs of BC through the enactment of Bill 55) held multiple fundraising dinners that raised funds for scholarships amounting to \$12,500 which was allocated to four universities in British Columbia: the University of Victoria (UVic), the University of

British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU), and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC).

The funds support full-time undergraduate students who demonstrate an interest in future public service (elected or appointed) and who may need financial assistance to continue their studies.

UNBC and UVic created endowments with these funds. This year, they were able to provide three scholarships from the invested earnings. UVic's endowment had grown to \$39,000 by March 2023, and UNBC's had grown to \$69,000.

For news of the UVic scholarships, turn to Page 4.

Her Honour

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

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

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

**P.O. Box 30024
Reynolds P.O.
Victoria, B.C. V8X 1J0**

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

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

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

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

Thank You and Miscellany

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

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From the Editor's Desk

My incurable addiction to political discourse forces me to plug in – albeit briefly – to CNN and MSNBC for a daily reminder that an epidemic of malicious intolerance and alt-right stupidity has America in a vice grip that is strangling common sense, productivity and civility in this presidential election cycle.

On Pages 10 and 11 in this issue, we are warned by the Angus Reid Institute that Canada is not immune. “Trump North,” as I call it, is real. And most Canadians believe they are not insulated from The Donald's brand of autocratic populism.

In this context, it is most heartening to offer a story on P-14 about the engagement between BC's Strengthening Democracy Foundation – now a registered society – and the BC Youth Parliament. The work former MLAs Graham Bruce and Mike Harcourt are doing – with the help of UBC's Max Cameron – to thwart the erosion of our democratic institutions is essential.

It is also heartening to chronicle the ongoing efforts of the members of the BCYP as they practice the art of political consensus.

In this issue, we say farewell to two politicians – Patty Sahota and Ed Broadbent – who, by their good works and best intentions, showed us that a life in politics can be worthwhile.

As I mentioned last month, I welcome contributions from AFMLABC members and readers. Letters, articles, and news like Geoff Plant's artful travel tales (Pages 6 and 7). It's not that hard; you can email me at ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com. Our copy deadline for the April issue is March 20th. Let me know ahead of time if the wordsmithing spirit has moved you.

The President's Report

I hope everyone enjoyed the BC Family Day holiday with their loved ones and were able to spend some quality time with their family.

Sadly, on February 12th, Patty Sahota, one of our former MLAs, passed away at 54. When I met Patty in 1999, she greeted me with a warm smile, was generous with her time and knowledge and was always there to help. After she left politics, she volunteered on numerous boards and had an unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in our community. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

February was Black History Month, which was significant for British Columbia, with our mix of cultures dating back to 1858. BC was governed as a colony in 1858 by Sir James Douglas, who was Black and the son of a Scottish merchant. The history books describe his mother as a "free coloured woman from British Guiana." To further ascribe his multicultural life, on a fur-trading trip to Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River in what is now called Washington State, he met and married Amelia, whose heritage was native Indian.

It was Governor Douglas who encouraged the first immigration of people other than Caucasians to BC. He actively encouraged Blacks from Africa to come to this new colony. On April 25th, 1958, the first Black settlers arrived at Fort Victoria. Despite the long and deep roots that people of Black descent have in our province, it was not until February 1994 that the British Columbia Black History Awareness Society was formed.

History was created in our Parliament Buildings in 1972 when Rosemary Brown and Emery Barnes became the first Black woman and first Black man to be elected to a Canadian legislature. In 1994, Emery Barnes was elected Speaker. He was the first Black person to hold the position of Speaker in Canada. The Black community has made enormous contributions to British Columbia, not just in modern history but also back to our roots 166 years ago.

In 1966, the United Nations declared March 21st the "International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination." As we observe this day around our country and around the world, we must all work together to make sure Indigenous, Black, Asian and other marginalized communities are better protected. We must also thank all the leaders from the past who worked hard to eliminate racial discrimination.

I'd like to thank Brian Kieran, Rob Lee, and Donna Hains for their excellent work producing *Orders of the Day* and helping me as President of AFMLABC.

If you have any suggestions, advice or just want to talk, please feel free to contact me at daveshayer@gmail.com.



Dave Hayer,
President

TIME TO RENEW



2024 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).

Fans of OOTD who are not former MLAs/Association members should send payment of \$40 to remain on the subscription list.

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You can also make your payment electronically by going to our website www.formerbcmla.com.

- Go to the Payments page in the navigation bar and follow the prompts.
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UVic students thankful for AFMLABC support

Karen Saini is a second-generation immigrant who was born and raised on the unceded Coast Salish Territory of the Lekwungen and W SÁNEĆ nations, where she currently resides with her husband and three-month-old baby.



Karen holds a Master of Public Administration, a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work, and a Diploma in Arts and Science Studies. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Administration while simultaneously completing a two-year certificate program at the University of Victoria.

Karen is currently employed as the Executive Director of the Oasis Society, an urban Indigenous organization, and is a Sessional Instructor and Content Developer in the Faculty of Humanities at UVic. She is also a term faculty in the School of Business at Camosun College. Karen was previously employed as the Executive Director of the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society and as a Research, Audit, and Policy Analyst with the Victoria Police Department.

Karen's PhD research is inspired by recent activist movements which have produced visible, deep racial divisions and a lack of trust between various groups in society and the police. In the short term, she hopes her research will add to discussions focused on reforming BC's Police Act and in the future, she hopes to develop and teach a course based on her findings.

Karen is grateful to the Association of Former MLAs of BC for selecting her as a scholarship recipient. She plans to apply the scholarship funds to her tuition.

My name is Allison Muzyka, and it is a great honour to have received a student scholarship from the Association of Former MLAs of BC.



Outside school, I enjoy reading books by Jodi Picoult, refreshing my mind with nature walks, watching *One Piece* with my son, and taking my four kids to the swimming pool!

I completed my bachelor's degree from the University of Victoria (UVic), majoring in Political Science and minoring in Public Administration. I am continuing my master's degree at UVic in Public Administration. I am deeply interested in public policy development and the leadership skills to organize and influence social and political change.

Through my cooperative education work terms at UVic, I have had the opportunity to work with the Policy Innovation Hub in Brisbane, Australia, and the Strategic Partnerships division at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). I am completing my master's thesis on socio-political vanguard leadership to understand the behaviours and skills of this type of leadership. I plan to have a career as a policy analyst in social policy development.

I am highly grateful to be a recipient of the AFMLABC student scholarship this year. The scholarship will allow me to continue my thesis research to fully immerse myself in the final stages of completing my degree.

"Pre-selection" proposal offends democratic process

Dear Editor:

I read the article written by former MLA Simon Gibson in the Winter issue of *Orders of the Day*. I found his proposal deeply disturbing. The "pre-selection" proposal is a direct affront to the democratic process.

The implication is that while party members are good enough to work, support and finance political parties, they are simply incompetent to select a "suitable candidate." Who will comprise the competent elite group entrusted to make the decision, and what is their agenda?

Our strength and stabilizing force in society is our differences. A subjective agenda determined to have all

party candidates singing from the same song sheet seems closer akin to a dictatorship than a democracy.

An elected MLA should have as their first priority the representation of their constituents and constituency. The second level of responsibility should be to represent the philosophical interests of party members.

A pre-selection of candidates for office should have no place in a democracy!

Cliff Serwa
MLA for Okanagan West (and South) 1986 – 1996
Director, AFMLABC

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Former MLA Patty Sahota mourned after sudden passing

Family, friends and former political colleagues are mourning the sudden death of former Burnaby-Edmonds MLA Patty Sahota.

Patty, 54, had been visiting her parents in Merritt from her Langley home when she passed suddenly on February 12th, according to her sisters. "We're just in disbelief," Nunden Sahota said.

Patty's sister, Neelam Kaur Sahota, said: "It is with profound sadness that we share the passing of Patty Sahota on February 12th. Patty's extraordinary life began in 1969 in the village of Jagpalpur, Punjab (India). Her journey continued in Canada, with her family settling in Merritt in 1979. Patty graduated from Merritt Secondary School, where her life revolved around sports. She had an affable personality that made her a natural leader on and off the court."

After high school, Patty attended Cariboo College (now Thompson Rivers University) in Kamloops. It was there that she became active in the British Columbia Liberal Party. "With her eternal optimism and infectious laugh, Patty seamlessly broadened her circle of friends at every step of her remarkable journey," her sister said.

She transferred to the University of Victoria and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. Patty then worked in various forest industry sectors before being elected to the BC Legislature in her early 30s. She served as the MLA for Burnaby-Edmonds from 2001 to 2005 and was appointed Minister of State for Resort Development. Patty was recognized as a trailblazer for women in politics.

Neelam said: "Patty lived a life of service, which brought her immense joy. She greeted everyone with a warm smile and was incredibly generous with her time and knowledge. After leaving politics, she continued to be active in the community by serving on numerous boards, including Simon Fraser University, Westminster Savings Credit Union (now Prospera), and Seton Villa Housing Society for seniors.

"In 2009, Patty was instrumental in bringing the World Police and Fire Games to Burnaby. Her most recent role as vice president of community relations and strategy for Flavelle OceanFront Development resonated with her unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in the community.

"Patty loved her family dearly and provided abiding and unconditional support. She was the family anchor, a proud



Patty Sahota celebrates with her supporters on her Burnaby-Edmonds election victory in 2001.

sister to each of her siblings, and a devoted daughter and aunt. Patty wholeheartedly enjoyed her regular trips to India with her mother and father, where she also formed strong friendships."

Her sister added: "She was steadfast in nurturing all her relationships but prided herself on keeping her own counsel. With her indomitable spirit and unmatched kindness, our beloved Patty was such a positive force in the world. Patty has left an indelible mark on so many lives, and her family will forever honour her legacy."

Patty is survived by her father Ajit Singh Sahota, her mother Harbhajan Kaur Sahota, and her sisters Nunden (Parm), Navy, and Neelam. She will also be deeply missed by her nieces Jasmin and Marissa, her nephew Jessy (Bhavan), and her many cousins. Patty is predeceased by her brother-in-law, Ross Yoneda and her nephew, Joshua Yoneda.

A funeral service was held on February 24th at Five Rivers Funeral Home in Delta, followed by a Sikh service at Ross Street Gurdwara in Vancouver.

A BNN report on Patty's untimely death stated: "Patty's career was a testament to her dedication to public service and her belief in the power of positive change. After her tenure as an MLA, despite not being re-elected in 2005, Sahota did not step away from public life. Instead, she immersed herself in various boards, contributing her expertise and vision to institutions, including Simon Fraser University.

"Her work ethic, coupled with a sunny optimism, made her a respected figure across political and professional communities."

Strait-laced temperance enthusiasts nowhere in sight

by Geoff Plant

(Excerpts from Geoff and Janet's blog *Feels Like Far*)

We are in Zihuatanejo, Mexico.

Zihua, as everyone calls it, is on the Pacific Coast of Mexico. The main thing I know about Zihua, and the reason we are here, is that it has reliably warm and sunny weather at a time of year when Vancouver has reliably wet and cold weather.

Hmm. It's day three. I must have learned something more than that. Okay, I've learned that there are three sizes of margarita in Zihua: Really large, really really large, and unbelievably large. And you have a choice: On the rocks or blended.

And, if you sit down at a table in a restaurant or a lounge chair by a pool, or if you go for a walk or a swim at the beach, the person next to you will almost certainly start up a conversation, and so far all those people have been from BC or Alberta. So, it's like meeting friendly people from home who are all away from home and ... inclined to be friendlier.

If you don't count the Mexican families and their kids, we are at exactly the average age (and, dare I say it, skin colour?) as everyone here. To push the point about how we managed to fly six hours south from Vancouver and somehow we are really nowhere very far away from home, on our walk to dinner yesterday evening (pizza, of course), we met two people we knew. You may come to Zihua to get away from winter weather, but don't think you're coming here to immerse yourself in an otherworldly cultural experience.

There is a town here, but we are staying in a resort area that borders a mile-long, beautiful beach called Playa la Ropa at the eastern end of a well-protected bay. Palm trees and tropical flowers are in bloom, and the beachside restaurants have tables on the sand. I don't know why I say this, but I think there is nothing about Playa la Ropa that strait-laced protestant temperance enthusiasts would approve of.

Yesterday we paid to spend the day at a beach club. Lounge chairs and sunshade umbrellas, and a nice fellow who moved the umbrellas every couple of hours to keep us in the shade. And he served us drinks and food whenever we raised our hands. For entertainment, we had Larry and Ruth from Calgary beside us, dips in the ocean, a supply of books, the occasional sight of banana boats and ski tubes and paragliders, and hundreds of pelicans who spend their days fishing for minnows up and down the beach.



The pelicans are amazing. They're like a smack across the face to everyone who thinks that we've got Mother Nature completely under wraps. You're standing out in a few feet of warm ocean water, and everywhere around you, pelicans in their dozens are divebombing, paddling, swooping just above your head and completely ignoring your presence. And there are lots of gulls doing the same thing for good measure. Don't they know this is supposed to be our beach?

According to Wikipedia, Zihua – and neighbouring Ixtapa, a hotel-lined strip of beach just over the hill from us – is the third most-visited area in Mexico, after Cancun and Puerto Vallarta. You can drive here from Mexico City in six hours. It has history, and I promise to learn some of it. Eventually. The Spanish got here in the 1520s. It was and still is a fishing village, although today, that village is surrounded by tourist infrastructure. But enough of that. I want to write about the margaritas!

We are staying in a seven-room “adult-only” hotel, which is a five-minute walk from the beach. It's old-rustic architecture style: Thatched grass roofs, wood plank floors, hacienda-style plaster walls. Our room has a very nice patio that I'm sitting on right now, overlooking the small but perfect azure-tiled swimming pool and with the blue water of the bay just visible through a row of palm trees.

It's a breezy, warm Sunday afternoon in Zihuatanejo.

The beach is busy. It's a holiday weekend. Tomorrow is Constitution Day: Everyone has come to enjoy the surf, the sand and the sunshine. We have enjoyed their company for a couple of walks and now we are spending the afternoon at our poolside, enjoying the quiet, and I've just finished another book.

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If you've seen the TV show *White Lotus*, you will understand me when I say it has weirdly affected my holiday experience. I hear voices around me, and I see people gathered at tables – honeymooners, families with their kids, and people on their own – and I wonder what secret trials and tribulations are at work in their lives.

The lovely Miss Janee and I are not very experienced in the genre of American television that I will hereby name “Unadmirable People Doing Unadmirable Things.” Still, we were encouraged by friends to watch *White Lotus*, and so we are partway through Season 2 – no spoilers, please, but really, any show in which Tom Hollander shows up mid-season with that greasy smile has got to end badly for someone, don't you think?

Meanwhile, we decided to dance precipitously close to the glittering world of the rich and famous – which is to say, Americans spending American dollars on holiday in Mexico – and ate dinner at a simply fabulous restaurant called *Mar y Cielo* a couple of nights ago. I won't give away too much about the price except to say that we spent about ten times as much there as we had at the *Jungle Pizza* restaurant the night before.

We strolled through the rustically elegant hotel lobby, descended the sweeping stone staircases down to the cliff top, passed by the infinity pool and were seated at our table overlooking the rocks and sea and the harbour and the sunset and thought, well now, we could get used to this. Someone appeared beside us and commenced to prepare a tomato-garlic-pepper sauce by grinding the ingredients in a stone bowl. Homemade bread and dried vegetable chips were placed on the table. I had scallops and sea bass, and Janee had grilled prawns and octopus.

The sun set. Wine glasses tinkled. The sky turned a warm golden yellow and then gradually darkened, and the streetlights lit up the hills above the harbour. There were stars above. I looked at the tables around us and thought: Well, who are the drug-addled, spoiled fratboy, sex-starved Silicon Valley billionaires out here on the terrace with us? See what I mean about *White Lotus*?

Yesterday, we went into town. A busy Saturday morning. Zihuatanejo somehow manages to blend its complete dependence on the tourist trade with remnants of a town lived in by actual locals. It's all closely packed together. Red terracotta-tiled roofs overhang the dusty sidewalks. Unmatched sets of two and three-story apartment buildings rise above. Palm trees line the alleyways. Fishermen tie knots in their nets at the beach. Moms drag their kids into



shops just like moms drag kids into shops everywhere else in the world. Dimly lit bars serve older men already hard at the bottle at 11 am. And there are seemingly endless rows of shops selling shirts and hats and bathing suits and beach toys and bottles of sunscreen.

I did a rough calculation. Two hundred baseball caps per store times fifty stores means that there are 10,000 baseball caps for sale in Zihuatanejo. I still haven't bought one. My favourite clothing item was a bright red t-shirt that had a picture of the face of Satan and the caption: “God's busy right now. Maybe I can help?”

Stop the presses: The lovely Miss Janee wants to go boogie-boarding with friends down at the beach. Gotta go!

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He was the best prime minister Canada never had

By Charlie Angus,
Writing in *Policy Magazine*

People are praising Ed Broadbent's integrity, vision and determination to make politics work for people. I like the line about him being the best prime minister Canada never had. Running through the eulogies is a sense that a better era in Canadian democracy has come to a close. Perhaps our feelings towards Broadbent are tinged with a nostalgic longing for leaders who aspire to more than a headline or scoring a quick gotcha.

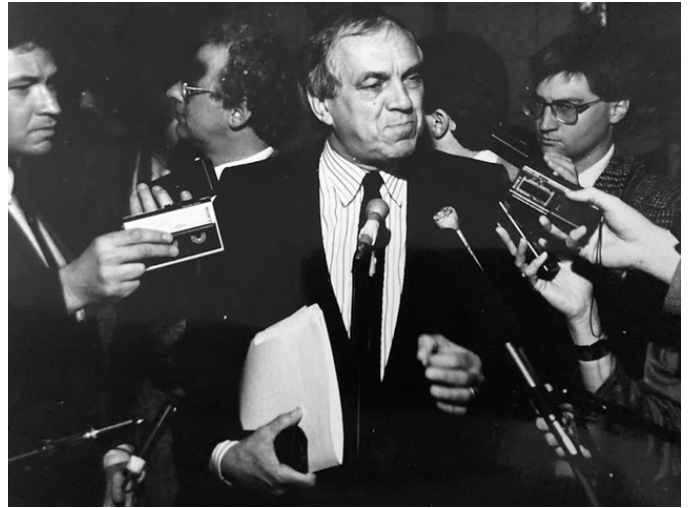
Broadbent's passing comes as Canadian politics is becoming increasingly toxic, dumbed down and personal. The name of the game is swinging for the algorithms, which only serves to augment dysfunction and discord. In the United States, politics has devolved into an all-out culture war, dividing regions, families, friends. While Canada is nowhere near this level of alienation, the disturbing symptoms are here. Little wonder that we long for this sense of an era that is no more in Canadian politics.

But if you knew anything about Ed, you'd know he'd bristle at the idea that better politics is out of reach. In an interview just before he died, Broadbent spoke of his optimism that Canadians would embrace a vision of politics that puts the common good at its heart. For Ed, it was always about focusing on making life better and more humane.

And, he was proof that in politics, real winners don't always take all.

I first met Ed Broadbent when I was an 18-year-old punk-rock kid. Canadian politics was in a dismal state. The economy was in tatters. Union manufacturing jobs were being wiped out across the continent. Ronald Reagan's militant politics of the "new right" was ascendant. Trudeau senior had lost his mojo. People were cynical. I had no plan to vote.

I was working as a dishwasher at a downtown Toronto restaurant when Ed Broadbent walked in. Even as someone disengaged from national politics, I knew Broadbent was a man of integrity. He spoke about justice, labour rights, and building a better Canada. I rushed out of the kitchen to shake his hand and thank him. Broadbent made me believe politics could be an honourable calling when it focused on being principled and practical.



Ed Broadbent on Parliament Hill, 1988

When I was elected in 2004, I had the honour of sitting with Broadbent in the House of Commons during his brief return to parliamentary life to support incoming leader Jack Layton. At our very first caucus meeting, I told him my dishwashing story. Ed loved it. But I soon learned that I was just one of thousands of people who had met him over the years and found him to be the real deal. Even though he had been out of political life for years, Broadbent continued to inspire people to believe that a better Canada was possible.

Ed was always a mentor to me, just as he was a mentor to so many coming up in my wake. This is one of the reasons he founded the Broadbent Institute. He knew that for left-wing politics to succeed, it needed a framework, analysis, and the support of a broader community of activists.

So, let's deconstruct the "best prime minister Canada never had." There was a moment in 1987 when the polling showed that Broadbent could have been PM. But it didn't happen. His best showing as leader came in the 1988 election, where he managed to win 43 seats. He resigned soon after, feeling he had let the party down and was not in a position to take it further. In a world where politics has increasingly become a zero-sum game, Broadbent would be seen as having lost. And yet his legacy stands so much higher than so many so-called winners of that era and the winners in subsequent parliaments.

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This is because we can measure Broadbent's influence in how he used his position as MP, statesman, and negotiator to advance key principles that have had a lasting impact on Canadian life. He put the issue of poverty on the national agenda. He insisted on pushing through the recognition of Indigenous Rights in the Charter despite Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's deep opposition. Broadbent made this monumental change possible because he was also willing to work with the PM on getting the Charter through a wall of provincial opposition. It was a great victory of principle and practicality working together across the political divide.

The impacts of that victory changed Canada forever and will continue to improve the lives of Indigenous

people in the future. Broadbent didn't win all the marbles in the game of politics, but he understood that real success in politics was the willingness to find common ground and to trust in the decency of opponents and the voting public to do the right thing.

Perhaps in the toxic brew of 2024 politics, Broadbent's legacy is more important than ever. He showed us that to make a real difference in political life, real winners don't always have to win it all.

(Policy Magazine was founded in 2013 as a pan-partisan platform for insight and analysis on Canadian politics and public policy. Policy contributing writer Charlie Angus is the MP for Timmins-James Bay.)

A few words from NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh

In 1989, Ed Broadbent rose in the House of Commons and delivered an impassioned speech on eliminating child poverty. He rightly called the reality that a million children lived in poverty in a country as wealthy as Canada “a national shame.”

He then presented a motion calling on the federal government to lift all children and families above the poverty line by the year 2000. It passed unanimously.

Thirty-five years later, there are still about a million children living in poverty in Canada. Canada lags far behind the Scandinavian countries that Ed held up as worthy examples of how a wealthy country could raise the well-being of all its citizens. There has been progress, but there have also been alarming steps backwards. According to a UNICEF Canada report, in 2021, child poverty increased for the first time in years.

Everywhere I go, I meet parents who are frustrated and exhausted. They are doing the best they can for their kids – many picking up second or third jobs. They feel like they are doing everything right but keep falling farther behind. The weekly trip to the grocery store is enough to bring some close to tears as they tell me they can't afford the food they used to buy regularly.

Some of today's politicians look at this reality and decide that the response should be to tell Canadians that government is “broken.” The message that government can't do anything to make life better is easy for many to



believe. Canadians are watching their leaders refuse to use the powers they have to make life easier and more affordable. Their friendly nudges do nothing to convince wealthy developers to build more affordable housing or grocery store CEOs to lower their prices. Keeping children poor and CEOs rich is a choice that governments make.

Ed Broadbent was highly critical of the governments he faced off against in the House of Commons. But he never lost his faith in democracy, never told voters that their country was broken. Instead, he told them that Canada could and should do better. For all of us.

Ed worked for social democracy his whole life. His last months were spent touring in support of his book that detailed his long and abiding belief in the simple concept that governments should serve the interests of the people who elect them.

Trump North? Canadians concerned we are not insulated

The 2022 Freedom Convoy not only challenged Canada's democracy, but provided evidence that Canada could be influenced by populist forces gathering in the United States spurred on by former U.S. President Donald Trump.

With it becoming increasingly likely Trump will be the Republican presidential nominee for the 2024 election, more doubts and concerns are surfacing in Canada as to what the knock-on effects might be.

The Angus Reid Institute finds that most Canadians believe they are not insulated from Trump's brand of populism. This opinion is held widely across political divides, though it's worth noting that the connotation of "Trump-style politics" may be more positive than negative for some respondents. Two-in-five (42 per cent) CPC voters believe America will be better overall if Trump wins again in the fall.

Two-thirds of Canadians (67 per cent) say they are proud to live in Canada, compared to 54 per cent who say this in the U.S. Twice as many residents north of the border say they believe it to be a caring society (59 per cent) as south (30 per cent).

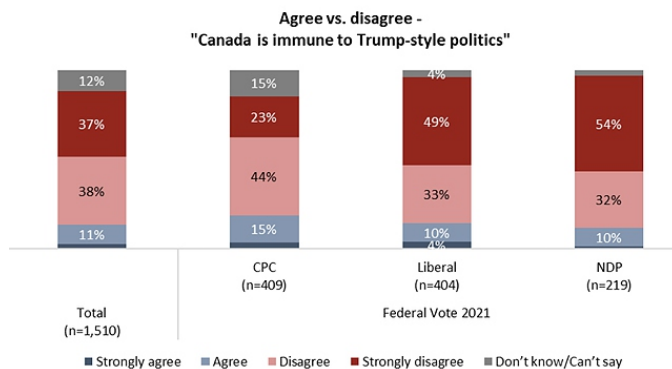
Domestically, the federal government and its current path appear to be the country's most polarizing element at the moment. Half (48 per cent) say Canada does not have a good system of government, and as many (47 per cent) believe the country is on the wrong track.

Just 13 per cent of Canadians say the "Trump" approach – driven by bombastic populist messaging, disregard for institutions and legal norms, and attacks on "the deep state" – is something to which Canada is immune. Three-quarters (75 per cent) say that the Trump trend – which has inspired imitators around the globe – is something that can happen in Canada.

It is no surprise, then, that Angus Reid finds Canadians, especially past Conservative voters, worried that key democratic pillars are weakening in Canada.

Canadians are more likely to believe elections are becoming less free and fair, the rule of law is being applied less equitably, and power is being less invested in the common people than they are to believe those principles are strengthening. However, these assessments of democracy vary greatly depending on respondents' past political affiliation. Past Conservative voters express serious doubt, and 2021 NDP voters offer mixed reviews, while those who voted Liberal are more positive on all fronts.

If there is a demographic highlight for Canadians' faith in democracy it is perhaps this: Young people are most likely



to say that one's ability to participate in civic life is growing stronger. Those 34 and younger are most likely to say this among both men and women, suggesting that although there may be a perceived problem, the ability to fix it appears to lay at least partially in the population's collective hands.

Clearly, even with some cause for hope or enthusiasm, Canadians do not offer a ringing endorsement of their current democratic system overall. As the saying goes, it could be worse.

Americans are vastly more critical of their democracy and institutions compared to their northern neighbours. This is particularly the case when considering the protection of human rights domestically and the electoral process.

Extending some of these domestic democratic perceptions to more macro views, Canadians offer positive assessments of their country on many fronts. Canadians who say they are proud to live in Canada outnumber those who say they aren't by a three-to-one margin. There are also more who believe Canada is prosperous and caring than those who don't.

More troublingly, just half (49 per cent) say Canada's values as a country align with their own. While this outweighs the proportion who disagree (36 per cent), meaning a full half do not consider that an accurate reflection of their relationship with the country.

There is more disagreement as to whether Canada's net effect internationally is a positive one, whether Canada's system of government is good and whether Canada is on the right track overall.

Across the board, assessments of Canada by Canadians have become slightly less positive in the past two years. However, the most significant drops are shown on the matters of whether Canada is prosperous and a positive

continued next page

player in world affairs. On the former front, two years of high inflation likely has influenced Canadians' views on the country's prosperity.

On the latter, Canadians have become more critical of Canada's standing in the world in recent years – half (49 per cent) said in 2022 that Canada's reputation in the world is worse now than it was 10 years ago – and more doubtful of Canada's approach when it comes to trade competitiveness, diplomatic influence, and military investment.

The strongest criticism of Canada comes from past Conservative voters, who are also more likely to believe political compromise is impossible in the country and show disenchantment with the current federal government.

Past Liberal voters offer the country glowing reviews at a majority level on all fronts. Past NDP voters see more warts but still are more positive in their assessments than past CPC voters.

There has been an evolution in Canada's federation in recent years. Historically, Quebec was home to much dissatisfaction with the country and its place within it. But the sovereignty push east of Ottawa has quelled significantly in recent years and instead ignited in the

prairies, where governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan have increasingly pushed back against the federal government and its policies.

This shift is evident in how Canadians in these different provinces assess Canada. Those in Alberta and Saskatchewan are the least likely to say they are proud to live in Canada; those in Quebec say they are proud at the highest levels.

Fewer than two-in-five (38 per cent) in Alberta, and three-in-ten (29 per cent) in Saskatchewan, say Canada's values align with their own; more than half (53 per cent) in Quebec believe that's the case.

Approaching half (46 per cent) in Quebec believe the country is on the right track, double the number in Alberta (24 per cent) or Saskatchewan (21 per cent) who say the same.

Americans are much more critical of their own country than Canadians are of theirs as the U.S. approaches the precipice of a Trump/Joe Biden rematch. Canadians are twice as likely to say their country is caring and believe their home country's values align with theirs. Though not offering a ringing endorsement, Canadians also profess more faith in their system of government.

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A mother in Parliament – it takes great tenacity

By Gabrielle Muzychka

Beyond the Hill

Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians

Being a parent and employed full-time has its challenges, no matter the profession. Members of Parliament have their own set of peculiar challenges to consider.

Michelle Dockrill, former NDP Member of Parliament for Bras d'Or, Nova Scotia, reminisces that she was a mother and a parliamentarian and that they were never mutually exclusive. Being a parliamentarian is an enormous commitment, and it takes great tenacity to ensure that motherhood and career can both be successful, given the requirements of parliamentary life.

The resources available for the families of parliamentarians have changed tremendously over the years, primarily due to the women who paved the way and demonstrated that parliamentarians can and will be mothers. People like Michelle and the Honourable Sheila Copps, former Deputy Prime Minister to Prime Minister Jean Chretien, were some of the trailblazers in this regard. In 1998, Dockrill was the first parent to bring a child into the chamber. Copps was the first to give birth while in office in 1987. Dockrill remembers a conversation with then-Speaker Gilbert Parent. He explained what was going through his mind at that moment: "I can call her out of order (...), and if I did that, I would have 52 per cent of the country knocking on my door telling me that I wasn't recognizing the reality."

Many big questions pertaining to family life must be considered by parliamentarians, such as where to keep your home base and how to build a network to allow for such a time-consuming career. "I was very fortunate because I had incredible support from my husband," Dockrill said. "There were many men whose wives were having newborn babies, but nobody knew about it. It wasn't a big deal because the presumption was that their wives were home looking after the babies," she continued.

The unpredictable schedule of a Parliamentarian led to the development of a daycare on the Hill. Established in 1982, this was an important resource for parents who were raising young children in the Commons. However, the daycare could only take children once they were 18 months old, presenting challenges to MPs who had



Michelle Dockrill with her child during a vote at the House of Commons in 1998. Photo by Tom Hanson/Canadian Press.

younger infants. Additionally, debates and proceedings could go late into the night, but the daycare was only open until 6 p.m.

Because parental leave was not implemented at the House of Commons until 2018, some members were left with the difficult decision of making other arrangements so they could attend sittings without their babies. A family room was added to Centre Block in 2015, giving the members a place to feed their children baby food in highchairs. The lack of resources in Michelle Dockrill's time demonstrated the extent to which it takes a village to raise a child. "There were Pages that walked him around Parliament Hill. There were interpreters who walked him around Parliament Hill. He was the Parliament baby," she reminisced.

In her time in Parliament, Michelle Dockrill also pushed for changes. "There was nowhere to nurse my son. I nursed him in the washroom outside of the Chamber one time. I sent a letter to the Speaker at the time because there was nothing and there wasn't even anywhere to change him in any of the Parliament buildings. I had asked one of the Bloc members, H el ene Alarie, who was expecting too, and we suggested maybe there should be some baby facilities," she explained. Finally, they added one changing table on each floor of the building.

Serwa family commits \$1 million to Ok College fitness centre

By Brayden Ursel
Castanet.net

The Serwa family has committed up to \$1 million towards the construction of a new \$14 million fitness and wellness centre at Okanagan College's Kelowna campus.

Cliff and Lois Serwa, honorary chairs of the college's *Thrive Here* campaign, will match every dollar donated by the public up to \$500,000. This is on top of a previously donated \$500,000. Cliff is a director of the AFMLABC.

"We're really hoping that it's going to inspire people in the community to join us and make that happen," said Okanagan College Foundation executive director Helen Jackman.

If the college can raise that additional \$1 million with the help of the Serwas' matching donations, Jackman says it will put fundraising for the project over the \$10 million mark, giving them enough confidence to break ground in the summer of 2024.

Cliff said: "Both physical fitness and mental fitness go hand-in-hand. It's a tremendous stress reliever. The educational process is very, very draining mentally, and tensions tend to build up. Physical activity helps that and makes you a more receptive student and a better product at the end of your tenure here at Okanagan College."

Serwa said the fitness centre will provide a home for the college's rep teams, like basketball and volleyball.

"The other interesting thing is it will provide a home for intramural sports, which will utilize more of the students of Okanagan College," he said.

"And the final thing is it will allow all the students of Okanagan College to remain physically active with a running track and an exercise room, and because of that, we're really supportive and deeply committed to the project."

Serwa said this project must move forward for the betterment of the community, the college, its students and the future of the city.

"It's one of those rare win-win-win situations that we are all partners in the process, and we are all winners as it will produce positive results year after year after year."

If you'd like to help in the building of the fitness and wellness centre at Okanagan College you can go to the Okanagan College Foundation website to donate.



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HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES





BC's 'Strengthening Democracy' teams up with engaged youth

By Brian Kieran

Strengthening Democracy Foundation's (SDF) mission to promote and support robust democratic institutions has found an eager audience amongst this province's students of political science.

Last September, on behalf of the foundation, I helped facilitate an introductory working breakfast in Victoria with members of the BC Youth Parliament. SDF directors Graham Bruce, Mike Harcourt and Max Cameron attended that very successful event. AFMLABC President Dave Hayer also attended. The BCYP group included the incoming and outgoing premiers and other members.

Discussions that morning over omelets and coffee at the Grand Pacific Hotel led to SDF directors Graham and Max participating in the 37th Vancouver Youth Parliament at the UBC Liu Institute for Global Issues in February.

Held under the auspices of the BC Youth Parliament, nearly 50 Vancouver high school students spent the weekend honing their political arts, simulating a session of the BC Legislative Assembly. With helpful mentoring by members of the BCYP, they selected a Speaker, listened to a Speech from the Throne, and debated two bills. The first was called the "Unhoused Action Act," and it dealt with action on the housing crisis. The second was a "Mental Health Support and Crisis Intervention Act," which outlined measures to support people experiencing mental health issues.

In addition, the model parliamentarians debated private members' motions, held vigorous Question Periods, and ran caucus meetings. The members worked very hard in a spirit of mutual support and good-natured camaraderie.

On the final day, Graham spoke with the participants about what to expect from a life in politics and why youth need to be engaged. It is expected that some of the participants will participate in future BC Youth Parliaments and – who knows – perhaps future elected representatives will emerge.

Max said: "We had a great day, and Graham really connected with the group. He gave a colourful overview of his life in politics, and it was a treat to have his son, Ryan,

talk about issues of the day and family relationships in politics."

Graham told OOTD: "In preparing for my presentation about the fragility of our democracy to the Youth Parliament, I was faced with dealing with the tension between the collective – majority rule – and the individual – freedom of speech – that exists within the very foundation of a vibrant democracy.

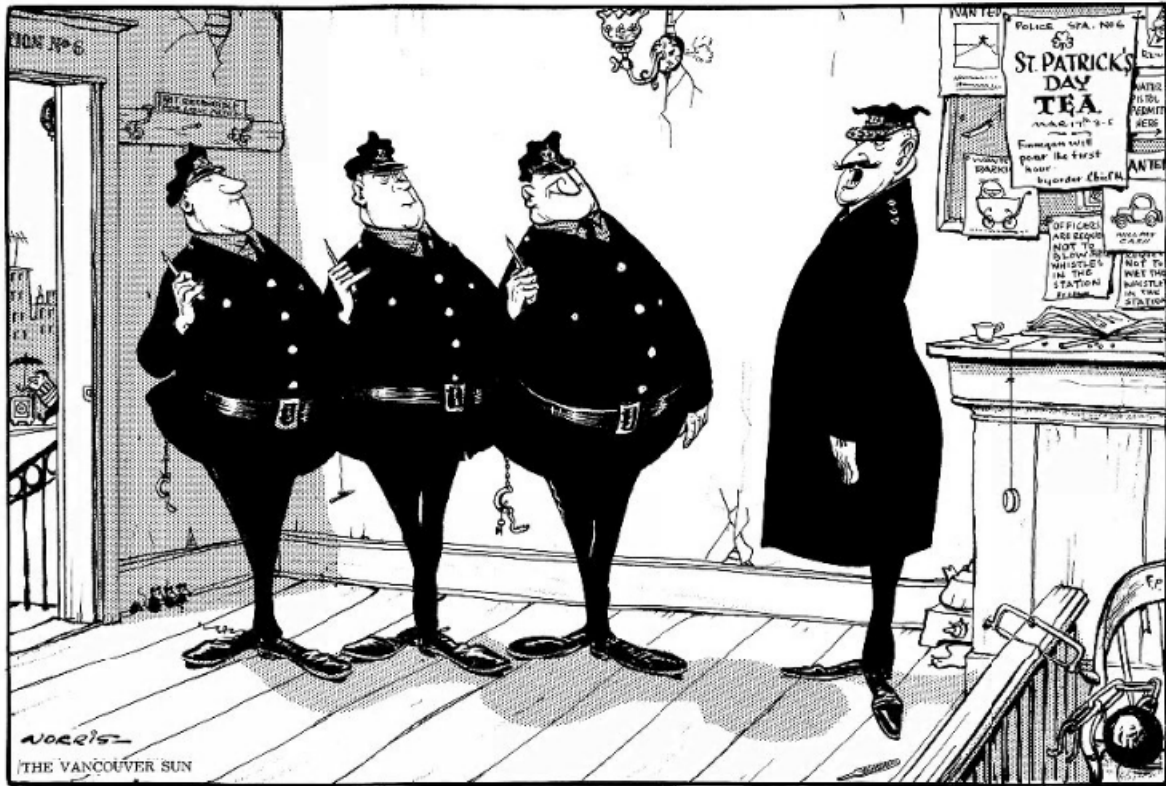
"Both need to be expressed respectfully with great tolerance for contrary opinion. We must be ever mindful of governments representing the majority that often take advantage of their power, offering solutions to problems we did not know we had or curtailing the free speech of individuals who may oppose the government's direction.

"A democracy requires the energetic interaction of citizens with their politicians to ensure a healthy respectful balance between majority rule and freedom of speech. We need to be ever vigilant of the mob mentality and left/right fanaticism while supporting good leadership. A dynamic democracy requires leaders to lead through wisdom and thoughtfulness while leaving the polling data to the ballot box," Graham said.

The founding directors of Strengthening Democracy are pleased to report that the society was formally incorporated under the BC Societies Act in early January. Purposes of the non-profit SDF as set out in its constitution are:

- Engaging diverse stakeholders to fortify and enhance Canada's democratic institutions;
- Addressing internal and external threats to democracy through active public discourse and citizen empowerment;
- Cultivating strategic partnerships and tangible deliverables for sustained impact on democratic institutions;
- To work with other governing bodies and organizations to achieve the goals of the Society and for the betterment of the state of democracy in Canada.

Len Norris



March 17, 1954

"Finnegan, O'Hara, Callaghan ... today, as any other day, the nationality of the impaired will have no bearing on the charge ..."

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The Princess Maquinna steams into our coastal history

Comox author and historian Ian Kennedy has brought a coastal shipping icon back to life with the publication of his eighth book, *The Best Loved Boat: The Princess Maquinna*.

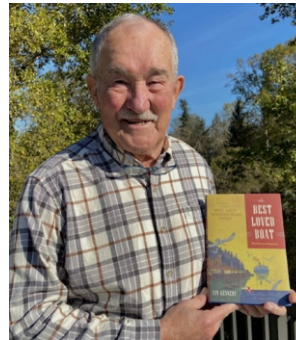
The book tells the story of the BC-built ship that sailed up and down the West Coast of Vancouver Island for nearly 40 years, from 1913 until 1952. She served all of the communities there before roads connected them to civilization.

The people on the West Coast relied on the *Maquinna* for their supplies, medical needs, food, mail, newspapers, liquor and transportation in and out of their communities. Weddings were timed to the ship's schedule, women took her to hospitals in Port Alberni or Victoria for the births of their children, and tourists flocked to buy tickets to cruise on her in the summers. She made three 1,500-kilometre trips a month from Victoria to Holberg near the top of the Island and back, stopping at more than 30 ports, some of which had no wharves.

"She was a workhorse, but she also featured luxuries seldom found in pioneering settings like the West Coast," said Kennedy. "She boasted luxurious cabins, a dining room with linen tablecloths, liveried waiters and fine food, and the people connected with the crew because the officers sat at the tables with the passengers for meals. It was like a local bus, and the people grew to love her, calling her "Old Faithful" because of her reliability. In her long career, she never came to grief."

The *Princess Maquinna* was built and designed specifically for service on the West Coast. She was launched from the British Columbia Marine Railway Shipyard in Esquimalt on Christmas Eve 1912. Her maiden voyage was in July the following year. She was not a large vessel, approximately 230 feet or 80 meters long, with accommodation for up to 300 passengers and ample cargo space.

She was also almost dowdy – not a pretty ship with her long stove-pipe-like funnel and very, very limited superstructure, or deck houses. Nevertheless, what she lacked in aesthetics, she more than made up for in her stout construction. She was designed to service the extremely challenging conditions on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, often called the Graveyard of the Pacific, because of horrendous storms.



Ian Kennedy has published his eighth novel, "The Best Loved Boat: The Princess Maquinna."

Her route barely changed in her years of service, originating in Victoria on day one, taking three days to reach her terminus in Port Alice before returning for another three-day trip down the Coast. Interestingly, up to forty stops were often scheduled for the trip. The ship was very much loved, not only by the passengers she served but by the crew. Her service regularity and schedule integrity were quite incredible throughout the years.

The book takes readers on an imaginary 1924 trip on the *Maquinna*, describing what such a trip would have been like, stopping at remote villages, canneries, whaling stations, gyppo logging shows and mines. "Boat days" at the various stops along the way brought the communities together, with neighbours meeting each other as the ship unloaded her goods. Readers meet Captain Edward Gillam and his crew, learn how the triple expansion steam engines drove the ship and how Gillam navigated in fog and still kept to a tight schedule.

The book also relates how Aboriginal passengers were not allowed inside the ship but had to stay on the forward deck or in the hold in bad weather, yet the CPR still used images of First Nation people to promote its cruises.

– Black Press and the BC Maritime Museum