

## BC Youth Parliament returns to the Legislature

After more than a year in the pandemic wilderness, the British Columbia Youth Parliament (BCYP) can once again hold its annual parliamentary session in the Legislature chambers over the December holiday season.

And, because of robust growth in the size of the AFMLABC's Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund, two deserving students living in rural BC will receive \$500 grants to make their participation a reality.

BCYP Alumni Society Registrar Rhonda Vanderfluit tells OOTD that the 93<sup>rd</sup> Parliamentary Session will run from December 27<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>. "We are hopeful for a safe return to in-person gatherings, and BCYP will follow all provincial public health guidelines, including a requirement that all participants be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

"As you know, the BC Youth Parliament is a province-wide, non-partisan organization for young people ages 16 to 21. It teaches citizenship skills through participation in the December parliamentary session and community service activities throughout the year," Vanderfluit says.

"I invite former and sitting MLAs to encourage eligible youth to apply to sit as members of the youth parliament. It is non-partisan, and applicants need only be interested in learning more about the parliamentary process and serving their community. I hope that you will be able to use your community contacts, including a constituency bulletin or newsletter if your office publishes one, to reach out to interested eligible youth," the registrar says.

"Each applicant who is accepted to attend as a member of BCYP must pay a \$425 registration fee. The BCYP keeps this fee as low as possible through contributions from organizations like yourselves."

The Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund is managed by the Victoria Foundation. Sara Neely, the foundation's



director of philanthropic services, says: "In recognition of the tremendous contributions of Hugh Curtis, the AFMLABC wanted to establish an annual award in his name for youth attending the parliament. The association wishes to encourage participation in the BCYP by youth who would otherwise have difficulty attending the parliamentary session through the provision of travel and accommodation or other necessary expenses.

"The fund, set up in 2015, has a current balance of \$38,022, thanks to the support of several generous donors. That's an increase of \$15,000 over the past year. Grants of \$1,000 were made in each of 2017, 2018 and 2019 to support the BCYP. A grant of \$500 was made in 2020. On the recommendation of the AFMLABC, there is more than \$1,000 available to grant out in 2021," Neely says.

Vanderfluit says: "We thank you for your ongoing support."

*See Pages 4 & 5 for more on BCYP*

**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:

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Association Membership (former MLAs) dues are \$60.00 per year. Annual subscription rate is \$40.00 for those who are not Association Members.  
Payment can be sent to the above address.

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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 for the newsletter.

### **Dues, Subscriptions and Donations**

**Linda Reid, Richmond**

## From the Editor's Desk

Ahead of most issues of OOTD I spend a lot of time bugging various staffers at the Legislature for the latest news. This month was no different. It's not like these folks have nothing to do all day. The resumption of full-on, in-your-face sittings of the House keeps these dedicated public servants on the run. But I bug them anyway, and, in every case, they resist the temptation to call block me. Instead, they do whatever they can to make sure readers of this newsletter are up to date on Legislature happenings.

So, I want to send a bouquet of appreciation to Legislature House Documents Manager Jacqueline Quesnel, Government House Communications and Events Officer Rachel Rilko, Sergeant-at-Arms Executive Assistant Angela Hemming, Office of the Clerk Committee Research Analyst Lisa Hill and Office of the Clerk Executive Assistant Cai Dong. You're the best!

I also want to thank BC Youth Parliament Alumni Society Registrar Rhonda Vanderluit and Victoria Foundation Director of Philanthropic Services Sara Neely for helping me assemble a look ahead to the BCYP's 93<sup>rd</sup> Session in December.

What great news that the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund has experienced robust growth in recent months allowing the AFMLABC to award \$500 grants to two BCYP members in the Hinterland who need assistance with expenses related to attending the December parliament. The fund has grown by about \$15,000 since we issued an appeal for help earlier this year. Obviously, members and friends of the association heard our plea and stepped up ... thank you so much.

As in years past, the Winter issue of OOTD will include a full report and pictures of the BCYP 93<sup>rd</sup> Session.

Finally, I want to thank Moe Sihota for making sure I had everything I needed to do a fitting tribute to CCF/NDP legend Frank Mitchell. And, thanks to former MLA Simon Gibson for his article in support of outreach to young people.

# The President's Report

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, we heard the chilling news that Sir David Amess, a British MP for 38 years, was brutally stabbed and killed in his constituency office. We think of his wife, children, and grandchildren in these horrible circumstances.

When we hear of these tragedies, we all reflect, I'm sure, on our own time in the political realm. Personally, I don't recall a time when I felt physically unsafe. More recently, though, with the advent of social media, it's clear the amount of venom that is directed at certain politicians and others is escalating.

Should we be concerned? I think so. I've known many very able people who could have made significant political contributions to our province and country but declined to get involved because they were discouraged by the unpleasantness of it all.

In this context, I was reminded of the article by Dr. Kim Speers in the October issue of OOTD. She talked about the shifting public attitudes during these pandemic times. Where, early on, there was significant

trust in frontline workers, experts and even politicians, today that trust has degenerated into aggression and even death threats as the pandemic wears on.

As current and former parliamentarians, I believe we all have a role in fostering and encouraging civilized political debate. Let's try to exemplify civility and decorum in our interactions and discussions. That said, QP has not been the best training ground in this regard!

Soon the BC Youth Parliament will meet. As in the past, there may be one or two future legislators amongst them. Let's ensure that their physical safety is something they'll never have to worry about.

Stay safe, everyone.

John Les,  
President, AFMLABC



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# BCYP immersed in the discovery of good governance

With the exception of crowd-chilling 2020, every year, 97 youth aged 16 to 21 from across the province have travelled to BC's Parliament Buildings in Victoria for a five-day simulation of the Westminster parliamentary system.

BC Youth Parliament members legislate bills that govern the organization's community service projects for the remainder of the year, hear from a large number of speakers from around the community, and engage in a variety of social activities.

BCYP Alumni Society Registrar Rhonda Vanderfluit says: "From the three readings of bills to Question Period, from parliamentary customs to the etiquette of addressing the Speaker, participants can expect to be fully immersed in the Westminster Parliamentary system during session as they produce legislation that governs BCYP's organizational structure and community service projects for the remainder of the year.

"Unlike most other debate opportunities for youth, the debate at session is collaborative rather than competitive. Members learn to bring their diverse perspectives together to determine and commit to the optimal way of bringing a positive impact to the community. To further highlight this aspect, there are no "party lines" at session. Each member is free to voice their own consciences.

"We also debate Private Member's Resolutions (PMRs), single-issue topics brought forward by our members. These are often issues of importance to members. Each member has a free vote in determining what our organization does for the year and which PMRs may be passed.

"Every night, Cabinet plans fun activities so members can get to know each other. These include icebreakers, a penny auction, our "camp night," where we introduce members to our largest and most ambitious service project, and on the last night, our dance. While these nightly activities are optional, we highly encourage them to give members an opportunity to make long-lasting memories."

The registrar says that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the nature of this year's nightly activities may differ, and Cabinet is hard at work to determine what fun activities will be planned for this session.



## History: The "Older Boys" network evolves

Youth parliaments in Canada have their origins in the "boys' work" movement of the YMCA over 100 years ago. Taylor Statten, a Boer war recruit who joined the YMCA as a means of continuing his physical fitness activities upon military discharge, was driven by his ambition to design a proper boys' work program with the Toronto YMCA.

In 1912, Statten became the Boys' Work Secretary on the national YMCA executive and established the Canadian Standards Efficiency Training program, a system of graded tests where boys passed from one level to the next. In 1916, Statten made his great "Coast to Coast Tour," which included a stop in Vancouver. It was on this tour that Statten first envisioned a national boys' conference, where the boys could determine their own priorities, and his idea soon developed into the concept of a boys' parliament.

The first BC Older Boys' Parliament (OBP) was held in January 1924. The premier was Walter S. Owen, who later became the Lieutenant Governor of BC (1973 – 1978). The mace was the donation of St. Andrews Presbyterian (now United).

The OBP did not meet during the Second World War. By war's end, the National Boys' Work Board was in a weak state of affairs. It took the Boys' Work Secretary for the United Church, Rev. Robert McLaren, to revive the Older Boys' Parliament. Through his efforts, the pre-war partners joined forces to establish a Parliamentary Convention in Vancouver to rebuild the organization. Delegates from around BC attended this conference, which expanded to include representatives of other boys' groups.

*continued next page*



The 1940s were an unstable period for the OBP. Fortunately, key alumni and strong premiers with good Cabinets carried OBP through the late 1940s when a proper senate and well-founded parliament were established.

During the 1950s, parliament began to develop a more service-oriented program run by its members rather than working with programs run by other organizations. Parliament's social service program expanded in the 1960s. While camping had been a regular part of the OBP since its inception, parliament had always been involved in other organizations' camps and never its own. This changed in December 1967 when the 37th Session legislated Camp Phoenix. That first camp was held at Camp George Pringle for 36 underprivileged and disabled boys.

Since the 5th Session, resolutions had been introduced to admit girls as members. By the 1960s, the voice of Canadian Girls in Training was taken up by the media, spearheaded by Victoria Times columnist Elizabeth Forbes. By the late '60s, the issue of girls' membership was being taken seriously by the OBP, but with strong senate opposition, including the veto of one resolution in 1971.

Some of the "Older Boys" who opposed admitting women went as far as to organize an "Older Girls' Parliament" to sit during the Easter break.

With the election of the NDP under Dave Barrett in 1972, pressure came from the provincial government to open OBP to all or face losing the use of the Legislative Buildings. Thus, the BC Youth Parliament came into being for the 44th Session in 1974. Its first female premier was Susan Hunter of the 49th Session in 1977 (the numbering of Sessions was altered in the mid-1970s).

## How the Hugh Curtis fund works ...

The Association of Former MLAs of BC is most grateful that its members, and friends of the association, stepped up this year to push the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund to more than \$38,000, thereby guaranteeing ongoing grants to deserving BC Youth Parliament (BCYP) members.

The AFMLABC continues to seek your support for the BCYP and its annual parliamentary session in Victoria. Donations can be made to the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund in two ways: Call 250-381-5532 to donate by credit card directly to the Victoria Foundation or send a cheque to the Victoria Foundation at #200 – 703 Broughton Street, Victoria, BC, V8N 1E2. Please ensure the cheque is made out to The Victoria Foundation and note the name of the fund in the memo line or a cover letter.

The Victoria Foundation's Director of Philanthropic Services, Sara Neely, says: "The capital of the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund is invested, according to the Victoria Foundation's investment policy, by several portfolio managers, overseen by the volunteer investment committee and supported by the staff director of investments.

"The amount available for support of the BCYP each year is based on the foundation's distribution policy which for 2021 is 4.25 per cent of the market value. The balance of the investment return (less the foundation's administration fee of 0.75 per cent) remains in the capital. It is this growth through investment, as well as through gifts, that results in an increase in the amount available for grants each year in support of the BCYP."

The 10-year annualized return to the end of 2020 was 8.08 per cent. By retaining a portion of the return in the fund, the fund value is inflation-protected, and a steady distribution is ensured each year to enable ongoing support of the BCYP.

More information about the foundation's approach to responsible investing is available in the Summer 2021 issue of Pulse at <https://issuu.com/page-one/docs/pulse21>

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# Explaining the role of an MLA to young people

By Simon Gibson

Current and former MLAs (on reflection), no doubt, can be quite surprised when a member of the public requests snow removal on their street or assistance with a filial immigration issue. MLAs, I have discovered, can sometimes be deluded into thinking every constituent is fully aware of the discrete levels of government.

As a past two-term MLA representing the Abbotsford-Mission riding and an enduring former member of Abbotsford Council, I can affirm my surprise with the general public's often limited view of the legislative responsibilities of their MLA. Happily, many of the public's interests and concerns – such as education, health, natural resources, agriculture and highways – are in the province's jurisdiction, so an MLA can frequently be more helpful than an MP or civic politician.

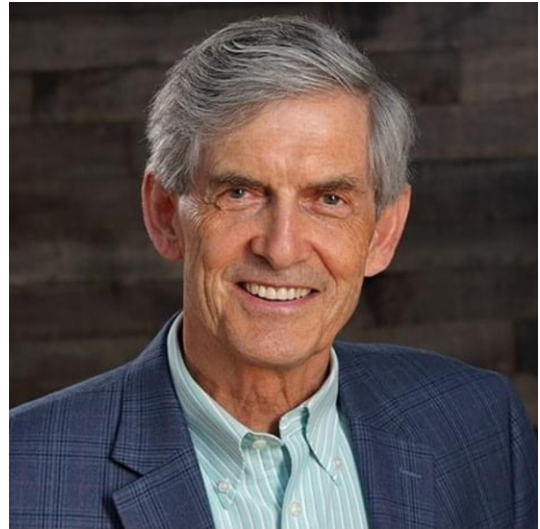
This opaque perception of the legislative duties of the three levels of government – four, if you include regional districts – can be even more dramatic when presenting to students, from elementary to university. During my tenure as an MLA, I had many opportunities to speak to students throughout the constituency.

It is obvious, perhaps, but I discovered in general, the older the student, the more informed on the role of the various levels of government. In the case of elementary students, some would know who I was because the teacher had given notice of my appearance to parents. These young students were generally energetic and active but not necessarily fascinated with the idea of having a politician extoll the virtues of the various levels of government

I had some success with these students – with their nominal attention spans – by departing from the “The Exciting Life of Your MLA” script and instead telling slightly relevant stories and cartooning on the whiteboard, which the teacher also seemed to appreciate.

Younger students are intrigued with first responders, such as police, fire and paramedics, so primitive drawings of emergency vehicles were particularly stimulating. The appropriate levels of government can also be illuminated with this approach.

High school students, many of whom are in the workforce earning a wage and paying taxes, have a burgeoning interest in government. Of course, some will be proud owners of a BC driver's license. These students, I discovered, have studied civics as part of the curriculum and are informed on many aspects of government.



On several occasions – with an approaching provincial election – teachers would provide opportunities for candidates to simulate a campaign appeal in the classroom. At the conclusion, students would “vote” for their preferred candidate. (My results were generally very positive, but I will resist the natural inclination to brag!)

University students – now voters – are more easily captivated with an explication of government, but it is the provincial level that is of particular interest to them. Issues such as tuition, student loans, program availability and admissions issues will be front of mind. As a former instructor at two universities, I was able to empathize and acknowledge many of their concerns.

University students had many opinions that they were willing to share in the classroom. They would encourage me as their MLA to lobby the government on their behalf. I would explain the palpable differences between government and opposition MLAs, including the opportunities to engage with ministers outside the Legislature.

They were especially surprised when I told them that decisions are never made in the Legislature – only ratified by the governing party. I reminded them that the speeches and dissonance are primarily dramas to draw attention to issues and alert the media to a particular policy.

I have many pleasant memories of engaging with students as an MLA – and I'm reminded that, perhaps one day, some of them will pursue elected office.

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

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# CCF/NDP legend Frank Mitchell passes at 95

It was a sad day in the Legislative Precincts when Esquimalt-Metchosin MLA Mitzi Dean rose in the House to announce the passing of a CCF/NDP legend, Frank Mitchell.

"I'm saddened to inform the House of the passing of former MLA Frank Mitchell," Dean told her colleagues. "In 1951, at only 25 years old, Mr. Mitchell was elected as a CCF member of the Legislature for Esquimalt-Port Renfrew. He was re-elected in 1952 and defeated in the 1953 provincial election. Never to give up, he was re-elected to this House in 1979 and again in 1983.

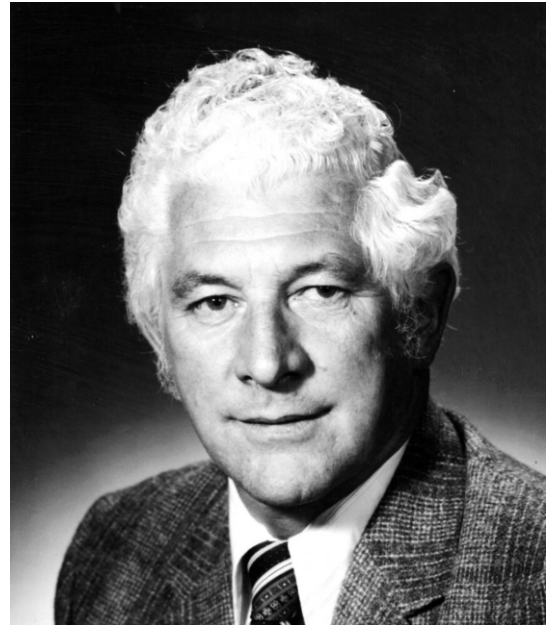
"Until his death, Mr. Mitchell was the last surviving member of a CCF caucus. A soft-spoken, gentle giant of a man and a former police officer, Frank, together with his late wife Kay Mitchell, built a political machine in Esquimalt that was the envy of the NDP. In fact, Frank and Kay first met at a CCF youth meeting, and after six years of courting, Frank finally mustered the courage to propose to Kay on Christmas Eve while on a rowboat ride off Saxe Point in Esquimalt.

"For the duration of their 68-year marriage, politics was a joint effort. Kay was the principal and architect of a political army large enough to knock three times on each door from Esquimalt to Port Renfrew in election campaigns from the 1960s to the turn of the century. That political foundation helped elect Frank and former Premier Dave Barrett, former Esquimalt MLAs Moe Sihota and Maurine Karagianis, and myself and our current Premier.

"Frank and Kay built their political dynasty on the notion that if you looked after people, they would look after you. Frank was known for his commitment to strong constituency service. Folks in the constituency knew that they could count on Frank to go to bat for them.

"Frank was a great believer in the adage that all politics is local. He focused on getting results for his riding. He helped local shipbuilders by saving the graving dock at CFB Esquimalt. Whether it be the Veterans Memorial Parkway, the highway to Sooke, seniors housing in Langford or Lampson Street School, his fingerprints can be seen throughout the Esquimalt-Port Renfrew corridor."

Moe recalls Frank's example: "Frank was both a mentor and a close friend. In 1986, he purposely delayed his retirement announcement until the writ was dropped to allow me to secure the NDP nomination as smoothly as possible.



"At the time, there were folks in our party who wondered whether a person of colour could capture a heavily Caucasian seat. Frank and his wife Kay would have none of that. I went on to become the first Indo-Canadian to be elected to any legislature in Canada – and I am greatly indebted to Frank and Kay.

"Without them, I would never have had the opportunity to lead the life that I have lived."

Having served as a paratrooper during the Second World War, Frank was deeply impacted by the atrocities of war. He believed that a better world could be created through peace, dialogue and social reform. It was this belief that stirred his interest in politics.

Upon retirement, Frank and Kay moved to Gordon's Beach at Otter Point, where they lived for 30 years. He took up gardening, beekeeping and boating – but, true to his roots and loyal to his cause, he never missed a chance to help in a federal or provincial election campaign.

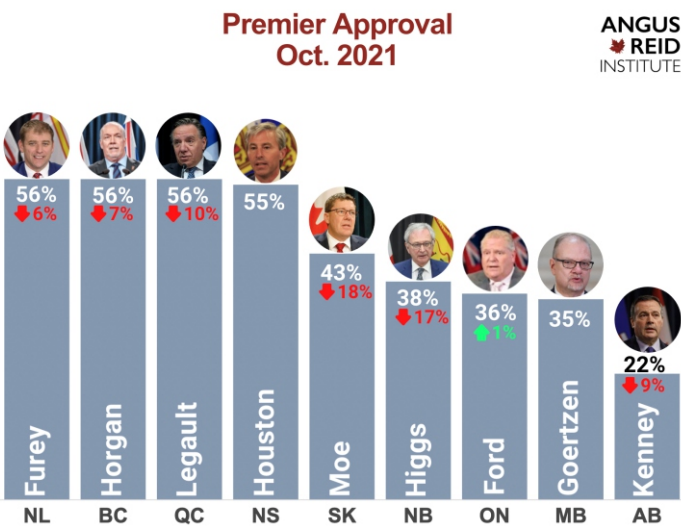
Frank and Kay are survived by their two daughters Erin and Maureen. Erin reports that she and Frank had their last daily visit on the afternoon of Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> and enjoyed a brownie together. Frank passed away peacefully on the early morning of Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>. He is survived by his grandchildren and beloved sons-in-law Cris and Glen, and many friends. The family made special mention of their friendship with Bob and Heather Phillips from Otter Point.

No service was planned.

# Across Canada, the autumn of our premierial discontent

Be it fourth wave frustrations, pushback over mask and vaccine mandates, or post-COVID anxiety, Canadians have grown significantly less impressed with their provincial leaders since the summer.

Even among those enjoying majority-level good opinion, the trendline tells a story of declining satisfaction since the last measurement in June. At 56 per cent each: BC's John Horgan is off seven points; Quebec Premier François Legault's approval has plummeted 10 points; and Newfoundland and Labrador's Andrew Furey's approval is down six points.



Since June, all but one premier who was in power at the time have seen their respective levels of approval decline, according to new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute. The lone exception? Ontario's Doug Ford, with a statistically insignificant one-point increase on job performance from Ontarians.

Premier John Horgan's popularity spiked after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic but has fallen seven points from June and 15 points from a peak of 71 per cent in May 2020.

In between, there was a summer heatwave that killed at least 569 people and contributed to forest fires that razed significant portions of the province – including destroying the town of Lytton. Meanwhile, the healthcare system faces challenges from the plateau of the fourth wave of the pandemic; as well, critics of health care staff shortages argue the government should have seen it coming. While the trend has been negative since May of last year, Horgan still holds the approval of more than half of British Columbians.

The most sobering assessments from their constituencies are for Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe and New Brunswick's Blaine Higgs. Both have seen their approval crash nearly 20 points in the last quarter, from 61 and 55 per cent then to 43 and 38 per cent now respectively.

In Alberta, Premier Alberta Jason Kenney is currently the least approved-of premier among his constituents at 22 per cent. Conversations about Kenney's long-term political future have been ongoing for some time, and with this wave of data, they are unlikely to abate.

It's been a brutal fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Alberta, and after characterizing the pandemic as "over" in July, Premier Kenney is bearing the brunt of what was most definitely not the "best summer ever." Despite this, Kenney has managed to hang onto his leadership of the United Conservative Party. He fought off a near caucus revolt by moving a leadership review to next spring, despite some members calling for it sooner.

## The last word: Voters now favour a proportional system

Canada's current first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system awards seats in parliament based on which candidate receives the most votes in each riding. Under a hypothetical proportional representation (PR) system, seats would instead be awarded based on each party's share of the popular vote.

After being presented with the alternative election result above, three in five Canadians say they would prefer the results under PR. Notably, those in Alberta and Saskatchewan, the two provinces most likely to support the CPC and thus most likely to benefit from the advantage PR would offer their party, have the strongest preference for the proportional seat count.

	CURRENT RESULTS	UNDER PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION
Liberal	158	109
CONSERVATIVE	119	109
BLOC Québécois	34	24
NDP	25	65
green	2	11
PPC PEOPLE'S PARTY OF CANADA	0	21



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## The Fall Session

# The COVID-19 consensus endures as opposition sharpens

By Jamie Elmhirst

We all know that our parliamentary democracy is an adversarial system. The Legislature is divided into government and opposition sides that sit two sword lengths apart. Government proposes, and the opposition opposes.

Media and the public focus almost exclusively on this relationship and all the entertaining conflict it produces. However, the operation of the Legislature itself, the “House Rules” so-to-speak, tend to be the by-product of all-party consensus.

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated some of the most radical departures from parliamentary norms in BC history, with most MLAs participating in proceedings remotely for the very first time. These sudden and unprecedented changes to parliamentary procedures held the potential for serious public disagreement between parties in the BC Legislature. We saw it at the federal level as the Official Opposition in the House of Commons publicly chafed under similar changes, complaining that it compromised its ability to hold the federal government properly to account.

In British Columbia, however, something quite extraordinary occurred. Not only did the three parties in the Legislative Assembly take a cooperative approach to the seismic changes in the way they did their business, but they also took a cooperative approach, with the guidance of the Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, to the social and economic response to the pandemic.

In BC's famously partisan Legislature, elected representatives chose to stand shoulder-to-shoulder, guided by science and expert advice, in response to the worst public health emergency in a century. This led to a strong vaccine take-up in British Columbia and broad public support for restrictive measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

A political consensus on COVID-19 in BC clearly helped foster a public consensus as well. One only needs to cast their gaze over the Rocky Mountains to our neighbours in Alberta to see how differently things could have turned out here.

BC's historical political consensus began to fray last fall when the premier called a snap election campaign. While no one can argue with the political result of the decision, it signalled the beginning of the end for the unprecedented spirit of cooperation in the BC Legislature.



Now BC's Official Opposition, despite being in the midst of a lengthy leadership process, seems to have found firmer footing under its interim leader. The Greens, of course, are no longer partners in a Confidence and Supply Agreement.

The fall session of the 42nd Parliament began on Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> with a return to full, in-person sittings of the Legislature for the first time since the start of the pandemic. With that return, we are also beginning to see a return to a more “business as usual” political atmosphere. While the “Bonnie Henry Consensus” still holds in terms of broad political support for the province's COVID-19 response, both opposition parties have sharpened their critiques of the BC Government, including its handling of the pandemic.

While some may lament a return to normal patterns of partisanship, in democracies, political consensus is typically only forged in the face of great conflicts, natural disasters or other emergencies. The gradual return to more typical levels of partisanship in the BC Legislature is reflective of our gradual return to more normal patterns of social behaviour and the fact that COVID-19 is no longer the undisputed heavyweight champion in terms of issues of public concern.

All good things must come to an end, and in the case of the extraordinary consensus that formed in BC around COVID-19, sometimes it's good that some good things come to an end.

**(Jamie Elmhirst is a former assistant to the Leader of the Official Opposition and a ministerial assistant. He has been in the private sector for the past 18 years, but continues to be involved in grassroots political organizing at the local, provincial and national levels.)**

# Sam or Tim, Tim or Sam ... pick your take

By John Mackie, Postmedia

Sam Sullivan and Tim Louis are polar opposites politically.

"He's right of Genghis Khan, and I'm left of Che Guevara," is how Louis puts it.

Both are quadriplegics and get around in wheelchairs. So, people often mistake one for the other even though they don't resemble each other at all.

"He's six-foot-two on a poor day, and I may be five feet on a good day," said Louis, 63. "He weighs maybe 200 pounds when dry; I weigh maybe 90 pounds wet. I have a beard, he's clean-shaven, blah blah blah. But people confuse us!"

It happens so often; in fact, they have a little routine worked out.

"We have each other's cell number," said Louis, "and if we're out and about and somebody comes up to us and calls us by the other's name, we immediately get on the phone," and get the person they think they're greeting.

"This is our arrangement. No matter how busy the other is, they will take the call, and then we'll improvise, having great fun."

It may boggle the mind of anyone who ever saw them jostling on Vancouver council, but former NPA mayor Sullivan and former COPE councillor Louis have become great friends.

Sam calls Tim "Leon Trotsky," after one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution. Tim calls Sam "Milton Friedman," after the free-market economist.

They even have "code names" for their spouses: Frida Kahlo for Tim's partner Penny, Rose Friedman for Sam's partner Lynn.

The code names came about after Sullivan phoned Louis one day. "He answered the phone on speakerphone and had a room full of revolutionaries that were trying to plot the downfall of the government or something," Sullivan recalls with a chuckle.

"Then he hears my voice, and I could tell he was audibly uncomfortable, having me on the speakerphone. I figured it out and said 'maybe I'll call you back.' From then, he would call me Milton, and I would call him Leon."

They've known each other forever.

"I knew of him through disability activism," said Sullivan, who turns 62 on Nov. 13.

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Photo by Arlen Redekop/PNG

“He was always quite a s — disturber as a young radical activist. He had this long hair that almost went down to the ground behind his wheelchair. We both used to take the Lions Club transit vans; they'd pick us up and bring us to school and such.

“One driver told me there was this guy named Tim Louis who wouldn't pay his bills because he thought the transit should be publicly provided. Eventually they forced him to pay, and he said 'you can come in and take the money; it's inside.' So they went in, and there was 30 or 40 jars.”

One of Sullivan's favourite memories of Louis is from a police briefing in the basement of city hall. At the time, Louis was getting around in an ancient electric wheelchair with a distinctive buzzing sound.

“The police were all there in uniform and everything, and you could hear his wheelchair coming from down the hall,” said Sullivan. “And I could see all these big guys starting to sweat and get really tense. Then Tim comes around the corner, barely moving, this quadriplegic. It was quite remarkable to see the change in composure of these pretty big guys with guns.

“I thought, 'wow, this Tim Louis, he strikes fear into all sorts of people.’”

For his part, Louis thinks that while Sullivan's “politics are abhorrent,” he knows he “would give you the shirt off his back.”

So, they love each other's company. They like to needle each other, though.

“I give (Tim) a hard time because I'm the guy who lives in a rented apartment, and my whole life has been involved in the charitable sector,” said Sullivan. “He owns a nice home on the west side, and he has renters, and he owns his office. He's really a quintessential capitalist.”

They have both done well through COVID-19. Louis has a thriving law practice that he's been running out of his home, while Sullivan has been making videos of civic history you can see on YouTube. He also put on one of his acclaimed public policy salons a few weeks ago.

Their favourite story about being mistaken for one another? That would be a charity event put on by Tim's partner Penny (aka Frida Kahlo) at the Vancouver Museum/Planetarium a few years ago.

“We had little nibbles and whatever,” said Louis. “Then Milton and I – code name Leon – decided to wander around. The aisles weren't wide enough for two wheelchairs, so we had to go single file. I'm in the lead, as I should be, and he's following.

“In the distance, there's a woman, and she turns and looks at me with this beautiful smile. I'm thinking 'this is great, a woman making eyes at me, wow wow wow.’

“She walks up to me: 'Sam! How are you?' She's in front of me, and Milton (Sam) is behind me. I turn 90 degrees to my left, so she is on my immediate right, and Milton is on my immediate left. And I say to her without blinking an eye: 'I'm great! Let me introduce you to my friend, Tim.’

“She comes around and walks up to him, and just as she's about to shake his hand, she freezes, goes white as a ghost, and runs away. And, the two of us are howling.”

Who says politics can't be fun?



## BRITISH COLUMBIANS BENEFIT FROM PERSONAL SERVICE

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For more on insurance brokers and the benefits they provide to B.C. families go to [bcbroker.ca](http://bcbroker.ca).

HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES



# Letters

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the Clerk of the Legislature, I am pleased to share the following announcement about the refurbishment of the Knowledge Totem.

As noted in the Summer 2021 edition, a refurbishment of the Knowledge Totem that stands on the Legislative Precinct was undertaken in recent months. The project was led by Doug August, Sr. (Sume'lh), son of Cicero August, the original artist and Coast Salish master carver of the totem.



On Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Raj Chouhan, hosted a ceremony to celebrate the raising of the totem with Mr. August and the refurbishment team, representatives from the Songhees Nation, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Lisa Hill  
Committee Research Analyst  
Office of the Clerk

**(Editor's note: Cicero August originally completed the pole in 1990 with the help of Doug and his brother Darrel in commemoration of the Commonwealth Games. The refurbishment this year was extensive and complex. It required stripping the paint, removing core rot and replacing it with good wood, sealing cracks, and repainting. A plaque at the base of the pole says the totem's figures – the loon, the fisher, the bone game player and the frog – represent lessons from the past and hope for the future.)**

Dear Editor:

Enclosed please find my dues for 2021.

I really enjoyed the recent article on the Oddfellows by Duane Crandall. My grandfather on my mother's side was an Oddfellow in Grand Forks. My grandfather on my father's side was a Mason, also in Grand Forks.

When the Oddfellows folded, the Masons took over their building and are still using it today.

Kind regards.  
Neil Vant  
Social Credit, Cariboo, 1986-1991

Dear Editor:

Wow, you have to hand it to Jim Hume and his sharp take on all things political. One of his best has to be October's column on a current "War Cabinet."

Taking us back to the Second World War and Winston Churchill's strategic upset of Labour's Neville Chamberlain, Hume goes on to recommend a current application of Churchill's leadership style. Arguing that COVID-19 and global warming are comparable to Hitler's conquests of 1940s Europe, Hume suggests a coalition cabinet appointing members of the opposition to a war-time-style executive council.

Don't know if this would work in today's ego-driven political scene, but Hume's suggestion is a razor-sharp analysis of how our parliament could work for the betterment of Canada.

Great writing Jim; keep it coming.

Cheers,  
Bruce Strachan  
Social Credit, Prince George South, 1979-1991

Dear Editor:

Trust the wisdom of the Old Islander – Jim Hume – to get COVID-19 and global warming in the same sentence. It is indeed time for a "War Cabinet" – in spirit and intent if we can't quite muster them in fact.

The two issues are intrinsically linked. As John Muir said more than 150 years ago: "When you try to separate any one thing, you find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

The good news is that when COVID-19 hit us in the face and put our backs against the wall, governments somehow found the money to support working people and businesses. We need the same commitment to transition our economy to address social inequities and to function within ecological limits.

It is recognized that legendary wartime British PM Winston Churchill changed the course of history from what might have been. But, where are such political leaders when we need them so badly today? Because Jim is right: This war requires Churchill-like courage and single-minded perseverance if we are to alter the course of a very traumatic future.

Joan Sawicki  
NDP, Burnaby-Willingdon 1991-2001

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## BC's new Sergeant-at-Arms

# Ray Robitaille brings a wealth of talent to the House

Former Calgary Deputy Police Chief Ray Robitaille has been selected to fill the Sergeant-at-Arms position at the BC Legislature.

Robitaille has more than 35 years of experience with the Canadian Armed Forces and the Calgary Police Service, with progressive leadership and six years at the executive level. He began his position at the Legislative Assembly on Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>.

He has extensive policing experience: As a patrol officer; undercover officer in the drug unit; member of the tactical unit; organized crime investigator; public safety unit commander; critical incident commander; community policing district commander; commander for Information, Communication and Technology Division; Real-Time Operations Centre commander; and deputy chief of both the Bureau of Operations and Bureau of Corporate Support. He participated in national and provincial level policing committees in emergency response, technology, human resources, and learning.

A dedicated and innovative leader of the Calgary Police Service, Ray was always searching for ways to improve the service through technology and innovation. He was project sponsor for notable initiatives such as the Organized Crime Operation Centre, the Intelligence-Led Policing Program, the Service Incident Command, the Emergency Management Interoperability, and the Real-Time Operation Centre – an intelligence-led hub that directs resources to deal with crime trends and critical incidents.

During his career, Ray formed province-wide and nation-wide relationships with other police agencies by being an active member of many associations. Nationally, he was a member of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and its Tri-Service Emergency Management Committee. He is also a former member of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police's Informatics Committee.

In recognition of his contributions to policing and outstanding achievement in public service, Ray is the recipient of countless awards. To name a few, he received the Chief's Award for Lifesaving in 1993, the Chief's Award for Leadership in 2001, an Award of Excellence in 2003 and a Community Service Award in 2014. He received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012, and in 2017 he was the recipient of the Governor General's Order of Merit of Police Forces for leadership and exceptional service.



In addition to his many local policing contributions, Ray is firmly committed to representing his country by helping those abroad. He served as a senior police advisor to the Afghan Anti-Crime Police as part of the Canadian policing contribution to the NATO training mission in Kabul, Afghanistan. In 2010, he volunteered and was accepted into the International Police Officers Program in support of international peacekeeping efforts in war-torn Afghanistan's local policing efforts.

During his time in Afghanistan, he coached and mentored Afghan law enforcement in anti-crime initiatives, including investigative and counter-terrorism practices – helping to build the foundation of an ethical and thorough judicial process for the nation.

He returned from his duties in Afghanistan in 2011, after a one-year tour of duty, receiving commendations from both the United States military and the Canadian government in recognition of his efforts. In 2011, he served as a Member of the Afghan National Police Policy Development Committee for NATO.

During the Fort McMurray wildfires in 2016, he was hand-selected by Canada Task Force 2 as the planning chief. His extensive incident command knowledge and ability to operate under protracted and adverse conditions made him an essential and critical member of this team.

Ray's community service has been acknowledged by awards such as the Chief of Defence Staff Commendation in 1987, a Special Service Medal from NATO in 1989, the Bill Shelever Memorial Award in 1990, an Operational Service Medal from Afghanistan, a Superior Civilian Service Medal from the United States and Afghanistan, and a NATO Article 5 Medal from Afghanistan in 2011.

## A hamster out-performs Warren Buffett



What if we told you there was a hamster who has been trading cryptocurrencies since June – and recently was doing better than Warren Buffett and the S&P 500? Meet Mr. Goxx, a hamster who works out of possibly the most high-tech hamster cage in existence.

It's designed so that when Mr. Goxx runs on the hamster wheel, he can select among dozens of cryptocurrencies. Then, deciding between two tunnels, he chooses whether to buy or sell. Yes, real money is involved.

The human behind this hamster's account and money has not been made public. But, his portfolio is up nearly 20 per cent since he started trading in June. And as of Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Goxx was performing better than Bitcoin, the Nasdaq 100, Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway and the S&P 500.

– NPR

## A dead end for self-drive cars

Residents of a dead-end San Francisco street have seen an influx of self-driving cars turn down their road before turning around and leaving again.

The cars – equipped with technology and a human driver in case of emergencies – appear completely baffled as they take in the street and make a multi-point turn to get out of the dead end. Not long after one car is gone, another one shows up and does the same thing. And it never really stops, according to the street's residents.

The self-drive company, Waymo, was originally Google's self-driving car project before becoming a separate subsidiary of the tech giant's parent, Alphabet. "We continually adjust to dynamic San Francisco road rules," said a spokesperson for the company.

– CBS, San Francisco



## Quebec's Celine becomes a Brit

A U.K. man formerly known as Thomas Dodd has reportedly changed his name to "Celine Dion" – and it's all coming back to him now as to how it happened.

Dodd told local news outlet Birmingham Live that he had a few too many beverages while watching a recording of a Dion concert and filed to change his name as a result.

"I am slightly obsessed with [her], I'm not going to lie," he said of the Quebec superstar. "During the lockdown, I've been watching a lot of live concerts on the TV. I can only think I had been watching one of hers and had a 'great idea' after a few drinks!"

The 30-year-old Staffordshire hospitality worker says he received the official paperwork in the mail and apparently paid £89 (around \$150 CAD) for the change, as well as multiple copies of the letter proving it's real.

– Huffington Post





## 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](http://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](mailto:sneely@victoriafoundation.bc.ca)

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## A teakettle's worth of energy powers Canadarm

Forty years ago this month, the Canadarm, a robotic space arm developed by Canada and Canada's most famous robotic and technological achievement, was successfully launched for the first time outside the Space Shuttle Columbia.

Designed to deploy and recover objects in space, the Canadarm made our country a vital partner with NASA and the International Space Station. The Canadarm was used on more than 90 missions during its 30 years of reliable service. In total, five Canadarms would be built and delivered to NASA.

Canadarm was designed in response to a need announced by NASA in the early 1970s. At that time, NASA was developing a new Space Transportation System: The space shuttle. The manipulator arm had to be able to unload the contents of the space shuttle's payload bay. The challenge was to build a tool to function flawlessly in space with the dexterity of a human arm. A number of Canadian firms participated in the project: DSMA Atcon, Spar, CAE Electronic and RCA.

The Canadarm that our robotic engineers ended up developing could lift more than 30,000 kg (up to 266,000 kg in microgravity) using less electricity than a teakettle. The materials were carefully chosen to stand up to the harsh environment of space: Titanium, stainless steel and graphite epoxy.

A white insulated blanket with controlled heaters was added to keep Canadarm at an acceptable temperature. The robotic arm had to be protected from the intense heat of the Sun and the extreme cold at night.

Meant for a weightless environment (zero gravity), the massive robotic arm could not be operated in Earth's gravity. A test room had to be built so that Canadarm could flex its joints. In addition, a computer-based simulation facility was constructed to evaluate controllability and provide training for astronauts.

The robotic arm had rotating joints at the shoulder, the elbow, and the wrist. Its hand (end effector) was a wire-snare device that fit over special grapple fixtures on the shuttle. Its elbow and wrist joint cameras provided visual inspection of the shuttle and its payload.

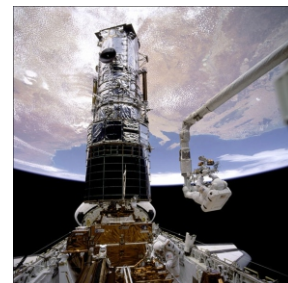
The robotic arm could be operated manually by an astronaut at the controls or programmed to function automatically.

The Government of Canada gave NASA the first Canadarm flight hardware as its contribution to the space shuttle project. Thanks to that contribution, Canada was able to send its first astronaut, Marc Garneau, into space.



*In November 1995, Mission STS-74 was Col. Chris Hadfield's first mission to space, and he was the first Canadian to operate the Shuttle Canadarm.*

*(NASA photo)*



Canadarm was deployed in space for the first time on November 13, 1981. The crew of Mission STS-2 deployed the giant robotic arm from the cargo bay of Space Shuttle Columbia, and, to everyone's great relief, it worked as expected.

After the commissioning of the first Canadarm, NASA bought four more robotic arms. The industry team responsible for those projects later became MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd.

Over its 30 years of service, the series of robotic arms performed many tasks. For example, they were used to send satellites into orbit, capture satellites for repair, assemble the International Space Station, support astronauts during spacewalks, film the experience of astronauts in space with two IMAX cameras and, inspect the shuttle's thermal protection system with the Orbiter Boom Sensor System.

In July 2011, the space shuttle program ended, with Space Shuttle Atlantis performing the last flight. Even though Canadarm has been decommissioned, its legacy lives on.

*(Library and Archives Canada)*