

## In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.



## He tended to the wounded and memorialized their sacrifice



John McCrae's iconic poem *In Flanders Fields* has come to symbolize our reflections on “the war to end all wars” and all the wars and deaths that have followed over the past 104 years.

The Canadian poet, soldier, and physician wrote it to memorialize the April 1915 battle in Belgium's Ypres. For 17 days, McCrae tended to those injured in the battle. The poem, written after the death of a close friend, was first published in *Punch* magazine and led to the adoption of the poppy as the Flower of Remembrance for the British and Commonwealth war dead.

McCrae was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and was the first Canadian to be appointed consulting surgeon to the British Army. Sadly, he died several months before Armistice Day in 1918. In 1915, McCrae had been stationed at Boulogne's No.3 General Hospital in France to oversee medicine. He worked there until his pneumonia-related death on January 28, 1918, at the age of 45. McCrae was buried with full military honours in Wimereux Communal Cemetery near Boulogne. His family home in Guelph is preserved as a museum, and the main street in Wimereux is now named Rue McCrae.

Her Honour

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

# 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.

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

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## From the Editor's Desk

November 11<sup>th</sup> ... for too many of us, it amounts to a few moments of silence wedged into an hour of remembrance on an autumn day like any other.

Not this year. On the global stage, major actors are tearing each other apart at a sickening and alarmingly perilous pace. And, the fear and loathing down here on Main Street is as thick as the smoke from a 21-gun memorial salute.

Appropriately, this issue of Orders of the Day takes more than a passing interest in the meaning and history of Remembrance Day (Page 4) as well as the roots of the Middle East Crisis (Page 5) and Canada's place on the world stage as seen through the eyes of Bob Rae, our permanent representative to the United Nations (Page 8).

Former MLA Simon Gibson has become a regular contributor to OOTD. I wish there were more like him. On Page 6 this month, Simon balks at our drift into a political environment that tolerates, even encourages and rewards polarization at the expense of civility and good governance.

Please check out Page 11 for the BC Legislature's invitation to former MLAs to participate in an online survey about their experiences and suggestions for improvements in the Legislative's parliamentary workplace culture.

On the subject of surveys, also make sure to check our readership survey package on Pages 15 and 16. OOTD is your newsletter, and we need your input to ensure it continues to meet your expectations.

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



# The President's Report

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, Canadians everywhere pay homage to the brave men and women who fought, were wounded and died in wars past and present to preserve the democracy that we hold so precious.

We would not be here today if it were not for veterans' sacrifices. We would not have the society we hold dear with the freedom to move, vote, choose, and speak.

Our courageous soldiers, sailors, aviators, peacekeepers, and others fought and died for us during the First and Second World Wars, in Korea, Bosnia, Afghanistan and other parts of the world and in the UN's peacekeeping missions. Thank you, veterans, for your past service and thank you to all who are serving today.

Like many other Canadians, our family has members and friends who were veterans. And, like many, I find November a difficult time. My wife Isabelle Martinez Hayer's grandfathers served in the First World War; my father-in-law, Jose Martinez, served in France during the Second World War.

My father, Tara Singh Hayer, was a captain in the Indian Army. My father did not lose his life in combat. It was taken right here in BC by terrorists to silence him in his effort to bring justice to the victims of the 1985 Air India bombing. My father

was assassinated at his home in Surrey on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1998. We are still awaiting justice after 25 years. No one has been charged and convicted even though he was under RCMP protection at the time of his death. And no terrorists have been convicted for the bombing that killed 331 innocents.

To recognize my dad's devotion to free speech, to our democracy and to our Canadian way of life, we hold memorial services every November 18<sup>th</sup>.

When I talk to Canadians, they tell me to look at the turmoil worldwide and feel lucky to enjoy a democracy many take for granted.

I encourage everyone to help preserve the freedom of speech and thought we enjoy by standing up for our hard-fought democratic rights. On November 11<sup>th</sup>, I encourage everyone to participate in ceremonies to honour the memories and sacrifices of our veterans.

If you have any suggestions, or advice, or just want to talk, please feel free to contact me. Again, thank you for your service.

Dave Hayer,  
President



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# A historian's take on the importance of Remembrance Day

On Remembrance Day, as Canadians honour those who sacrifice their lives to defend our freedom, one historian says it's more important than ever to talk about war and history.

"There still is an awful lot of war in the world," said Margaret MacMillan, a history professor at the University of Toronto and the University of Oxford. "And I think we have to really think about it because if we don't think about it, we won't think about how to stop it, how to end it, how to control it, how potentially to outlaw it altogether."

MacMillan is the author of several histories. *War: How Conflict Shaped Us* examines how conflict has shaped human society and culture over the centuries. She spoke with the CBC about what it means to remember and how learning about the past can help us in the present. Here is the Q&A.

## ***Why is it important that we, as Canadians, remember what happened in a war that was more than a century ago?***

It's part of our history's fabric and what made us what we are. As a result of the First World War, we became more confident of ourselves as a nation and a player in the world. We were prepared to take more independence from the British. And as a result of the Second World War, we became pretty much fully independent from the British. These were significant moments. So, it's useful always to look back and see how we got to where we are today.

## ***You say that remembering war and how we remember it is often tangled up in political and social debates. What do you mean by that?***

We change ourselves as a people, and we change how we remember the past, and that's inevitable.

The First World War, when it was first commemorated in the 1920s on the Allied side, was commemorated as a victory. People talked about our dead heroes in Canada, Britain, Australia, and elsewhere. And it was seen as a victory and a triumph. Then, gradually, the doubts crept in, especially as the world moved into the Second World War. I think people began to wonder if it was all a waste.

***In this book, you grapple with what war is, and you say that war is not an aberration, nor is it the absence of peace. Tell me more about that in terms of how we define war.***



Especially in the West, we've had a very long period of peace. So, we tend to see war as something that happens when things go wrong, that it's an aberration. We need to recognize that war is not something that just happens by mistake, and a few people want. The danger of war is always present. I'm not saying we're going to have a war anytime soon, but there still is an awful lot of war in the world.

## ***When war happens elsewhere ... what does that do to our relationship with war?***

It can make war seem glamorous. There are hundreds of books about war, and many of them are about battles – and movies . . . Those who've actually fought don't see the glamour of war. They see the hideous side of war, and they see its costs. We may falsely glamorize war, thinking it's something noble and glorious because we haven't actually experienced it.

We tend to distance ourselves. Quite wrongly, we say: "Well, some parts of the world are just warlike. I mean, those people are just like that." That's dangerous because we have to be aware of the costs of war that are borne by the world as a whole, not just by those who suffer and die.

## ***Why is it important to study war, especially now?***

Because if we don't study it, we fail to understand how human society has developed. Canada may not be a nation forged in war, but it's a nation which has been affected by war. Governments have grown stronger, for example, partly because of the need to respond to war. The country came very close to breaking up a couple of times over the conscription issue.

I think there's a sort of distaste for studying war. I was giving a talk once, and someone said: "Why don't you study peace instead?" And I said, You have to understand war if you want to understand peace."

# Israel-Gaza war: The Middle East conflict explained

During the First World War, Britain took control of the area known as Palestine following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled that part of the Middle East.

The land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and Arab majority, as well as other smaller ethnic groups.

Tensions between the two peoples grew when the international community gave the UK the task of establishing a "national home" in Palestine for Jewish people.

This stemmed from the Balfour Declaration of 1917, a pledge then Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour made to Britain's Jewish community.

The declaration was enshrined in the British mandate over Palestine and endorsed by the newly-created League of Nations – the forerunner of the United Nations – in 1922. To Jews, Palestine was their ancestral home, but Palestinian Arabs also claimed the land and opposed the move.

Between the 1920s and 1940s, the number of Jews arriving there grew, with many fleeing from persecution in Europe, especially the Nazi Holocaust of the Second World War. Violence between Jews and Arabs, and against British rule, also increased.

In 1947, the UN voted for Palestine to be split into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem becoming an international city. That plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by the Arab side and never implemented.

In 1948, unable to solve the problem, Britain withdrew, and Jewish leaders declared the creation of the State of Israel. It was intended to be a safe haven for Jews fleeing persecution and a national homeland for Jews.

Fighting between Jewish and Arab militias had been intensifying for months, and the day after Israel declared statehood, five Arab countries attacked. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were forced out of their homes in what they call Al Nakba, or the "Catastrophe." By the time the fighting ended in a ceasefire the following year, Israel controlled most of the territory.

Jordan occupied land, which became known as the West Bank, and Egypt occupied Gaza. Jerusalem was divided between Israeli forces in the West and Jordanian forces in the East. Because there was never a peace agreement, more wars and fighting occurred in the following decades.

In a war in 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as most of the Syrian Golan Heights, Gaza and the Egyptian Sinai peninsula. Most Palestinian refugees and their descendants live in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as in neighbouring Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Neither they nor their descendants have been allowed by Israel to return to

Israel's boundaries today



their homes. Israel says this would overwhelm the country and threaten its existence as a Jewish state.

Israel still occupies the West Bank and claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a hoped-for future Palestinian state. The U.S. is one of only a few countries to recognize the city as Israel's capital.

Over the past 50 years, Israel has built settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where more than 700,000 Jews now live. Settlements are held to be illegal under international law – that is the position of the UN Security Council and the UK government, among others – although Israel rejects this.

Gaza is a narrow strip of land sandwiched between Israel and the Mediterranean Sea but with a short southern border with Egypt. Just 41km long and 10km wide, it has more than two million inhabitants and is one of the most densely populated places on Earth.

In the wake of the 1948-49 war, Gaza was occupied by Egypt for 19 years. Israel occupied Gaza in the 1967 war and stayed until 2005, building Jewish settlements. Israel withdrew its troops and settlers in 2005, though it retained control over its airspace, shared border and shoreline. The UN still considers the territory to be occupied by Israel.

Several issues divide the Israelis and Palestinians. These include:

- What should happen to Palestinian refugees;
- Whether Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank should stay or be removed;
- Whether the two sides should share Jerusalem;
- And – perhaps most tricky of all – whether a Palestinian state should be created alongside Israel.

*continued on Page 10*

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# Healthy politics challenged in an age of overt polarization

By Simon Gibson

Is there a societal trend more troubling than overt polarization? It is a phenomenon that categorizes and divides people based on a variety of arbitrary issues or perceived personal beliefs.

Nowhere is this tendency more apparent than in the very public arena of politics, be it federal, provincial, or municipal.

Elected representatives may entertain a willingness to engage in such forums, but they often limit constructive discourse and overly simplify issues, which is, in effect, a form of “dumbing down.”

When particularly zealous political players are determined to generate significant competition, their actions can become an overwhelming effort to discredit and undermine their opponents' credibility, even their character. Of course, such behaviour can elicit a compensatory response from their opponents, who are empowered with the energy generated by their supporters.

This behaviour, unfortunately, can be accepted as the reality of political life and, with momentum, can elevate to a very combative level.

My two-term tenure as an MLA sensitized me to this general lament as, at times, for example, I observed a level of rancour that would often surprise visitors to the House, especially teachers with their young students.

Much of the animosity generated was entertaining, but virtually everyone knew that such discord was purely drama and that no one would be persuaded.

Having been elected to Abbotsford Council a year ago, my return to municipal politics has allowed me to transform from observer to participant again. At the risk of being considered naïve, I would like to pass along a few suggestions to my municipal, provincial and federal colleagues, some thoughts on how to moderate damaging polarization and return to a more assuaging approach to political discourse.

First, I would recommend that political rhetoric be built upon the facts of a particular issue, as opposed to the supposedly flawed character of the competition. In other words, relevance or practicality should matter first and foremost and trump malice, accusations and name-calling.

Second, I think it is best to seek the “middle ground” whenever possible. Research has demonstrated that most voters are not comfortable in either far-left or far-right political camps. Attempting to embrace a more temperate



style of policymaking will result in governance that encourages less divided discourse. The “middle ground” also offers the benefit of allowing incremental adjustments which may be acceptable to both sides of a particular issue.

Third, most of us are familiar with “passive-aggressive” individuals, and we try to resist their malicious tendencies whenever possible. I have discovered that these people can be found everywhere – especially in charged political environments. Sadly, passive-aggressive politicians will say nice things to your face but are exceedingly critical when you are not present. If you see yourself lapsing into this kind of conduct, make every effort to abandon this polarizing behaviour.

Fourth, gossip is the unfortunate news conductor in many political environments. Gossip is always negative, such as: “I hear Jeff is going broke,” or “I’ve been told Ray and Nancy are separating.” It is rarely positive, which makes it especially polarizing.

Gossip is destructive because it spreads rapidly and widely and is soon accepted as fact even though all or parts of the “story” are contrived. Should you receive such a polarizing message – perhaps inadvertently – choose not to continue its circulation.

Fifth is the matter of social media. I am reminded of a bumper sticker I saw while on vacation in Oregon: “What’s done in Seaside stays on Facebook.” We often read about high-profile individuals – including politicians – who have “liked” a Tweet or Instagram message, only to be caught up in a vortex of malevolence. Social media communication lingers forever – and that’s a long time.

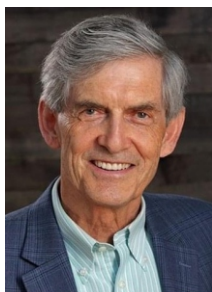
Social media offers advantages for connecting conveniently with constituents, but opponents and critics will troll your messages for unintended consequences that generate controversy. Extreme caution is the best policy, and you will almost certainly experience concomitant peace of mind.

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We can perhaps be comforted – as Canadians and British Columbians – as we glance across the border and observe the elevated polarization in Washington, DC. The personal attacks, partisan extremism and lack of consensus are significantly more intense than we experience. However, we must appreciate that even our milder encounters with polarization are not in the best interests of good governance at all levels in our country.

Our democracy, built upon a common set of sustaining values, can only flourish if we reverse the current drift toward destructive polarization.

**(A frequent contributor to OOTD, Simon Gibson was elected in 2013 to represent Abbotsford-Mission for the BC Liberals. He served two terms. Before his election, Gibson was a member of Abbotsford City Council for more than 30 years. He has returned to his role as a councillor.)**



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HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES



In the next issue of OOTD

## Trolled on the campaign trail – abusive online incivility



In the upcoming December issue of OOTD, we will feature a report from UBC graduate student Rakashdeep Singh Kainth on a study titled: *“Trolled on the Campaign Trail: Online Incivility and Abuse in Canadian Politics.”*

The study, by the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions at UBC, examined incivility on social media in the 2019 federal election campaign and beyond. It drew on an analysis of more than one million tweets directed at candidates and interviews with candidates, campaign staff, and elected officials.

Major findings include: About 40 per cent of tweets at candidates were uncivil, and 16 per cent of all tweets were abusive. Just seven per cent were positive; party leaders and other high-profile candidates received exponentially higher levels of incivility than most candidates. Candidates' experiences varied significantly depending on their prominence before the campaign began, and campaign teams often struggled to manage online incivility and abuse.

Rakashdeep is a graduate student in the School of Public Policy. He is also the facilitator for “Strengthening Democracy BC,” an initiative led by former premier Mike Harcourt and former cabinet minister Graham Bruce that has the blessing of the AFMLABC Board of Directors.

# We are convened at a “crossroads in history”

**(Editor's note: The following is Canada's national statement at the General Debate during the opening of the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>. It was delivered by Bob Rae, Canada's permanent representative to the United Nations. His remarks about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were most prescient.)**



Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Colleagues.

We convene at an important moment – what you have called a “crossroads in history.” We are collectively at the halfway point of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030.

We recently adopted a new treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. The consensus this past week was clear: We are far behind where we need to be to meet the commitments we have made to our populations and to one another.

And as a result, the health of the planet, our people, our institutions, and our global economy are at serious risk.

This diagnosis was reinforced to me while I was preparing this speech, in a conversation with Wilton Littlechild, a former Grand Chief of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations and member of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

He implored Canada – and all of us here at the United Nations – not to look at the issues that confront us in isolation. He urged us to address them in their totality, recognizing their deep interconnectedness.

We are admitting more immigrants into Canada than ever before. Because immigration has made Canada a better country and a better place to live.

We have put a price on carbon. Because we know that we must do everything we can to stem climate change, even as we acknowledge that we ourselves have much more to do.

At the same time, reducing emissions is a duty that is shared, and so is the need to ensure access to capital – on longer terms and with more favourable rates – to help in the green transformation of the global economy.

We need to embrace the truth that the need for adaptation and resilience is universally shared. But what is not universally shared is access to capital. That is why Canada has now agreed to donate more of our Special Drawing Rights at the International Monetary Fund – 48 per cent to other countries.

Late last month, at the invitation of the Government of Panama, I visited the Darien Gap – the jungle that serves as the border between Colombia and Panama. I saw firsthand the irregular migration crisis unfolding there, with hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children risking their lives to make the perilous jungle crossing.

The sheer number of people seeking to make the journey is shocking and must be seen in a broader, global light. In just one day, 4,000 people arrived at reception areas in Panama. I saw and spoke with individuals from many different countries – from the region, of course, but also from Afghanistan, China, and Syria.

This is a regional crisis, yes. But it is also part of a global crisis. Currently, over 108 million people are forcibly displaced around the world.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya from Myanmar remain displaced in Bangladesh as the military junta continues its brutal crackdown on the people of Myanmar.

In Afghanistan, where the de facto authorities have implemented a targeted campaign of repression against the rights of women and girls, over 5 million people are displaced or refugees.

After more than 12 years of brutal conflict, more than 12 million Syrians are internally displaced or refugees in neighbouring countries.

And in Sudan, the conflict has displaced two million people, including those already scarred by genocidal violence in the Darfur region.

At the start of the General Debate, the President of South Africa eloquently reminded us that the SDGs' achievement depends fundamentally on women's empowerment in all spheres of life.

He called for the provision of adequate health services to every woman, child and adolescent and made a passionate plea for the equal representation of women in decision-making. He is right.

Yet, even today, we are told in negotiations at the United Nations that gender is “too divisive” an issue. That seeking ambition in this area is “insensitive.” That it should be put aside for “compromise.”

We could not disagree more. Gender equality is not an issue to be bartered against perceptions of progress, nor is it a “nice to have” or something to be qualified.

Gender equality is an inalienable right. It is core to our inherent dignity. It is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace. It is also essential in our work on Financing for

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*Haitian migrants wade through water as they cross the Darien Gap from Colombia to Panama, hoping to reach the U.S.*

Development and the reform of the global financial architecture.

Canada is committed to responding to the calls of developing countries in these discussions. But it must be said: Sustainable economic growth cannot be realized if opportunities for women – who represent half the global population – are suppressed.

Mr. President, we must also uphold the values of free and democratic societies. This is all the more critical as some seek to bend the rules of state-to-state relations for political expediency.

We have seen and continue to realize the extent to which democracies are under threat through various means of foreign interference. When we don't adhere to the rules we have agreed to, the collective threats start to dismantle the very fabric of our open and free societies.

We must also protect and promote the principles of equity and universality of access to health care for all, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Everyone benefits by building open, inclusive societies, promoting and protecting human rights, and upholding the rule of law. This is how we get closer to equality and justice.

Over the past decades, the Middle East and the wider world have struggled with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Today, we are greatly concerned by the trajectory of the conflict, noting in particular the rising levels of violence in the West Bank and Israel, the continued risk of escalation between Israel and Gaza, and the continued growth of Israeli settlements.

The measures and rhetoric that make two states impossible must stop. Canada is committed to the goal of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

We urge both parties to return to the negotiation table and make the difficult compromises required to achieve this result. The measures and rhetoric that make two states impossible must stop from both sides.

The Government of Canada firmly believes that unilateral actions that jeopardize efforts for peace and the failure to embrace two states only ensure more and deeper conflict. This must be avoided.

I must conclude my address on what remains the greatest threat to international peace and security today: Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Charter of the United Nations clearly commits us all to end the scourge of war. The Russian Federation signed the Charter.

And yet, despite that signature, for 580 days, the Russian Federation has continued to wage its illegal war of aggression against its neighbour and a fellow member of this organization, Ukraine.

The costs are staggering. Above all, there is an unimaginable cost counted in Ukrainian lives. In hospitals and schools bombed, in people displaced, in children abducted and forcibly deported.

The ripple effects of this war are also felt around the world. President Zelenskyy rightly likened it to a global natural disaster. Russia's invasion has caused volatility in food and energy prices at a time when the global economy is struggling.

And what has the Russian Federation done in response? It has blocked the Black Sea Grain Initiative and held the world's food supply hostage. Russia does not have the best interests of any of us in mind.

We cannot allow President Putin and his enablers to tarnish and rewrite the international rulebook as they see fit. Russia is accountable for its actions, and we are determined to see justice served.

We welcome the International Criminal Court indictments against President Putin and his Commissioner for Children's Rights because no one is above the law.

Mr. President, Canada will continue exploring every measure to support Ukraine as it defends itself, its people, its identity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. This support fully aligns with our commitments under the Charter and international law. It is Russia's unlawful and immoral war that is not.

And it is Russia's war that must come to an end – as this Assembly and the International Court of Justice have demanded.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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## Israel-Gaza in context

Israel-Palestinian peace talks were held on and off between the 1990s and 2010s, interspersed with outbreaks of violence. A negotiated peace did seem possible in the early days. A series of secret talks in Norway became the Oslo peace process, forever symbolized by a ceremony on the White House lawn in 1993 presided over by President Bill Clinton.

In a historic moment, the Palestinians recognized the State of Israel, and Israel recognized its historical enemy, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. A self-governing Palestinian Authority was set up.

Cracks soon appeared, though, with then-opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu calling Oslo a mortal threat to Israel. The Israelis accelerated their project to settle Jews in the occupied Palestinian territories. The recently emerged Palestinian militant group Hamas sent suicide bombers to kill people in Israel and wreck the chances of a deal.

The atmosphere in Israel turned ugly, culminating in Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination by a Jewish extremist on November 4, 1995.

In the 2000s, attempts were made to revive the peace process – including in 2003, when a roadmap was devised by world powers with the ultimate goal of a two-state solution, but this was never implemented.

Peace efforts finally stalled in 2014 when talks failed between the Israelis and Palestinians in Washington.

The U.S. prepared the most recent peace plan when Donald Trump was president, which was called "the deal of the century" by Prime Minister Netanyahu, but was dismissed by the Palestinians as one-sided and never got off the ground.

Gaza is ruled by Hamas, an Islamist militant group which is committed to the destruction of Israel and is designated as a terrorist group by the UK and many other countries. Hamas won the Palestinians' last elections in 2006 and seized control of Gaza the following year by ousting the rival Fatah movement of West Bank-based President Mahmoud Abbas.

Since then, militants in Gaza have fought several wars with Israel, which, along with Egypt, has maintained a partial blockade on the strip to isolate Hamas and try to



*The Oslo peace process was symbolized by a ceremony on the White House lawn in 1993 presided over by President Bill Clinton.*

stop attacks, notably the indiscriminate firing of rockets toward Israeli cities. Palestinians in Gaza say Israel's restrictions and air strikes on heavily populated areas amount to collective punishment.

This year has been the deadliest year on record for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. They also complain about the restrictions and military actions being carried out there in response to deadly attacks on Israelis.

These tensions could have been one of the reasons for Hamas's latest attack. But the militants may also have been seeking to boost their popularity among ordinary Palestinians, including using hostages to pressure Israel to free some of the estimated 4,500 Palestinians held in its prisons.

The U.S., the European Union and other Western countries have condemned the Hamas attacks on Israel. The U.S., Israel's closest ally, has given the Jewish state more than \$260 billion in military and economic aid over the years, promising additional equipment and ammunition. It also sent an aircraft carrier, ships, and jets to the eastern Mediterranean.

Russia and China have refused to condemn Hamas and say they are maintaining contact with both sides. Russian President Vladimir Putin has blamed U.S. policy for the absence of peace in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, regional power Iran is a key supporter of Hamas and that of another regional enemy of Israel, the Lebanese Hezbollah movement. Questions have been asked about its role in the recent attacks after reports that it gave the go-ahead for them days before.

# Former MLA inducted into Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

Four-time Paralympian and former BC MLA Michelle Stilwell is one of three new inductees into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

The Parksville resident was honoured along with wheelchair basketball player Chantal Benoit and former Prime Minister Stephen Harper (builder category) at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Disability Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto on Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>.



David Crombie, chair of the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame, said: "People with disabilities are making substantial and meaningful contributions across Canada daily. Furthermore, there are individuals who have made remarkable contributions to enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities, raise awareness or increase

opportunities. Our 2023 inductees are contributing to that distinguished history of accomplishments."

Stilwell is a remarkable individual who has succeeded in multiple domains. A six-time gold medallist in wheelchair basketball and athletics, she is the only female Paralympic athlete to win gold in two summer sports events. Stilwell is also a nine-time world champion and multiple world record holder in the 100m, 200m and 800m races.

As the MLA for Parksville-Qualicum, she served two terms and was the Minister for Social Development and Social Innovation (2015 to 2017). Stilwell is an active member of multiple national and international boards. As well, for 15 years, she oversaw all operational aspects of an international public speaking company.

Inductees to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame are chosen independently each year by a selection board from a group of highly accomplished nominees. The 2023 inductees join a prominent group of 123 past inductees recognized for their exceptional personal and professional achievements over three decades.

## WORKING GROUP ON PARLIAMENTARY CULTURE

# SURVEY OF FORMER MEMBERS

The Working Group on Parliamentary Culture was established in May 2023 by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Raj Chouhan, as a forum to examine Legislative Assembly programs, procedures and practices and identify potential ways to strengthen its parliamentary and workplace culture.

The Working Group invites former Members of the Legislative Assembly to provide input on their experiences and suggestions for improvements to parliamentary and workplace culture through an online survey by November 23.

For more information about the Working Group, visit:  
[www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/speaker](http://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/speaker)

To participate in the survey of former Members, contact:

Office of the Clerk  
email: [officeoftheclerk@leg.bc.ca](mailto:officeoftheclerk@leg.bc.ca)  
phone: 250-387-3785.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

# Letters

## Do you have an ICBC tale to tell? Read this:

Dear Readers,

I am writing this letter to ask for your assistance with a book I am writing.

I believe there is much to be gained from a documented and objective examination of how we, as a society, address critical issues in our midst. In writing my book I am focused on one of these critical issues – vehicular activity.

Our society runs on wheels. At one point or another, every single item we own had a ride on a motorized vehicle. Every service person arrived at our home or place of work in a car or truck. We take our kids to school, go to work, or visit Grandma for Thanksgiving dinner in a car.

Automobile insurance provides a professional workforce to gather funding and distribute it so that we can all benefit from vehicular activity, be protected from legal liability, and be compensated for losses sustained. The form and substance of the system that facilitates vehicular activity have been debated since at least 1965.



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Since March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974, ICBC has been the dominant provider of our automobile insurance. As opposed to a complex and opaque web of private sector companies, ICBC's information is centralized and open to public scrutiny as a Crown corporation. It has been under the full spectrum of BC-based political administrations over a timeline that is now half a century long. Its successes and failures have affected us all every time we venture on a roadway, whether as a motorist, cyclist, or pedestrian. Because of its transparency and longevity, it can be carefully examined and, hopefully, learned from. Because of its magnitude and relevance, its history is something worth contemplation.

I believe that one can only write successfully about something when they have first-hand experience. I have been involved professionally with public automobile insurance since November 1971. I began employment with ICBC in November 1973 as a public information officer. Over the years, I transitioned from that role, and I have been working as a mediator for the past 23 years. I've seen it up front and have thought about it a lot.

Many people have influenced the path taken by ICBC. From the corporate mail room up to the CEO, to the minister's office, to the network of outside contractors and other professional bodies ... all have contributed to the evolution of ICBC. I wish to include their voices.

I fully realize that to many, insurance is as dry as dust. What would be the point of writing a book no one will read? I intend to write the story in magazine format to address these concerns. It will be published on a dedicated website that is accessible to all. It will be structured in volumes. Each volume will cover specific phases of ICBC's history.

Many of you have been directly or indirectly involved in the course ICBC has charted. Your perspectives are an important element that I would like to capture. Therefore, I'm writing this invitation for you to contact me and provide your views.

I can be reached by email at [nick@njd.ca](mailto:nick@njd.ca) or by telephone or text at 604-230-2301.

Regards,  
Nick de Domenico  
Courtenay



# Len Norris



*"... Following in-depth studies of school property tax trends, food price index, environmental impact and population growth curve, our decision is not to get you a baby sister."*

## Building a Better Future

through our people, our planet, and our products.



Canfor is committed to creating a future as sustainable as our forests. We maintain a deep respect for the communities and people our business touches, the products we create and the natural environment we rely on to thrive.

Learn more by visiting [sustainability.canfor.com](https://sustainability.canfor.com)



## Eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month

The Armistice agreement was signed between Germany and the Allied Forces in Paris on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, at 0500 hours. The ceasefire went into effect at 1100 hours the same morning.

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

The first Armistice Day was observed in 1919. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, in the House of Commons, the then-acting Prime Minister of Canada, Sir George Foster, read a message from King George V addressed "to all peoples of the Empire."

This was his letter:

"To all my people:

"Tuesday next, November 11<sup>th</sup>, is the first anniversary of the Armistice, which stayed the worldwide carnage of the four proceeding years and marked the victory of right and freedom. I believe that my people in every part of the Empire fervently wish to perpetuate the memory of that great deliverance and those who laid down their lives to achieve it.

"To afford an opportunity for the universal expression of this feeling, it is my desire and hope that at the hour when the Armistice came into force, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, there may be for the brief space of two minutes, a complete suspension of all our normal activities. During that time, except in rare cases where this may be impractical, all work, all sound and all locomotion should cease so that in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead."

Earlier in 1919, Isaac Pedlow, a Liberal MP, introduced legislation in the House of Commons to provide for an annual Armistice Day. All members of the House agreed that setting aside a day to honour the war dead was of high importance; however, some disagreed on whether that day should be fixed as the 11<sup>th</sup> of November.

Pedlow cited support from business groups that a Remembrance Day be held on a designated Monday in November and not specifically on the 11th to avoid inconvenience to businesses and employers.



In addition to his bill, Pedlow had called for an annual holiday of Thanksgiving Day, which until this time had been held on a date which varied at the government's discretion. He proposed recognizing the second Monday in November as "Thanksgiving Day" as a "perpetual memorial of the victorious conclusion of the recent war." Another member of the House was successful in delaying the discussion on the bill for six months. The House never resumed discussion on the proposal.

In 1921, Prime Minister Arthur Meighen's Unionist government introduced legislation to formally establish Armistice Day as a legal holiday. Section 2 of The Armistice Day Act 1921 provided that every year, the Monday in the week that the 11th of November falls should be kept as a legal holiday under the name of "Armistice Day." This legislation drafted by the government was influenced by Pedlow's 1919 proposal.

As Pedlow's earlier proposal had been utilized to draft this bill, the question of Thanksgiving Day again came to the fore. Section 3 of the same act provided for a Thanksgiving Day to be held on the same date as Armistice Day.

From 1921 to 1931, Canada observed Armistice and Thanksgiving Day on the same date each year. An independent MP from British Columbia, A.W. Neill, introduced The Armistice Day Amendment Act in 1931. His bill repealed sections 2 and 3 of The Armistice Day Act and substituted a clause which fixed November 11<sup>th</sup> as Armistice Day. Thanksgiving Day was regulated back to the practice before 1921, wherein the date was fixed at the government's whim.

# Snail mail and e-post deliver first OOTD Survey responses

By Brian Kieran  
Editor

As I reported in the October issue of *Orders of the Day*, my annual challenge has been generating and fostering reader engagement to sustain relevant content in the newsletter.

I stressed the importance of your participation in our fall survey of OOTD readers (Page 16), pointing out that we need your input to make sure that our newsletter serves as a bridge that connects us.

In a perfect world, OOTD should reflect our members' collective wisdom, experiences, and insights. It is meant to be a platform where your voices can be heard, your stories can be shared, and your contributions can make a significant impact on our community.

Survey responses are trickling in as I write. One of our loyal readers responded this way:

How thoroughly do you read the newsletter? **“Cover to cover.”**

How satisfied are you with the newsletter content and format on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not satisfied and 5 being very satisfied)? **“5”**

What types of content do you find most valuable in the newsletter? **“Legislative updates, member news, think tank analysis, public policy polling, and opinion pieces.”**

Do you have any suggestions for additional types of content? **“Discussion of current and emerging political issues such as 'Fake News' and 'The Rise of Polarization' are important and show we're keeping up to date.”**

Are there specific topics or issues related to promoting good governance that you want to see covered in the newsletter? **“The above comments pretty much cover my interests; keep it timely.”**

How would you rate the readability and clarity of the newsletter's content on a scale of 1 to 5? **“5”**

Would you be interested in contributing articles or letters to the newsletter? **“Yes”**

Is there anything else you would like us to know? **“(As an engaged reader) I have a bias, but I would say it's an excellent publication. Keep it up to date and timely, and push the current issues.”**

This survey response was completed online on our website ([www.formerbcmla.com](http://www.formerbcmla.com)) and automatically emailed to my inbox.

It's easy. You can do it!

## 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 "AFMLABC Hugh Curtis British Columbia Youth Parliament 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.

**Make your cheque payable to The Victoria Foundation.** Note the name of the fund in the cheque 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 AFMLABC Hugh Curtis BC Youth Parliament 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).

# Orders of the Day and you – a readership survey

*(Editor's note: Rob Lee and I really need your feedback and ideas to improve this newsletter. Job One for us is engaging with our audience to ensure the newsletter meets their needs and furthers the AFMLABC's mandate of promoting good governance.)*

Name/address (if you wish): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## How thoroughly do you read the newsletter?

Cover to cover    Breeze through    Set it aside with the shopping flyers

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

**How satisfied are you with the newsletter content and format on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not satisfied and 5 being very satisfied)?** \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

## What types of content do you find most valuable in the newsletter? (Select all that apply.)

Legislative updates    Member news    Think tank analysis    Public policy polling  
 Opinion pieces    News from other associations of former parliamentarians

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have any suggestions for additional types of content?**

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Are there specific topics or issues related to promoting good governance that you want to see covered in the newsletter?**

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

**How would you rate the readability and clarity of the newsletter's content on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not satisfied and 5 being very satisfied)?** \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you be interested in contributing articles or letters to the newsletter?**    Yes    No

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you access Association information on the website? ([www.formerbcmla.com](http://www.formerbcmla.com))**    Yes    No

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** The Association of Former MLAs of BC  
P.O. Box 30024 Reynolds P.O.  
Victoria, B.C. V8X 1J0

***Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!***