

“It has been a privilege to serve the AFMLABC”

By Jeff Bray
President, AFMLABC

So begins my final President's Message for Orders of the Day. I find it hard to imagine all the time that has passed since that first phone call from Hugh Curtis. You know the one; it was similar to the one many of us had over the years from Hugh; reminding us of our membership dues; prodding us for an article or letter for the newsletter; selling us tickets to the annual dinner.

Hugh Curtis was, for many years, the heart and soul of the Association of Former MLAs of BC. He was the driving force behind the events, editor of the Orders of the Day, top ticket seller, Membership Chair and chief bottle washer! When he passed away, we suddenly realized how much he did for our association. Gillian Trumper, Penny Priddy and I have subsequently worked to fill his immeasurable shoes.

Through the work of our Executive and the amazing editorial tandem of Brian Kieran and Rob Lee, the association lives on. No doubt these last several months have been a challenge. We have had to cancel our annual dinner (which we will hold in 2021, most likely in Vancouver), and we are hosting our AGM this September via Zoom!

However, this has also given us pause to consider how the Association can best fulfill its mandate which is:

- To put the knowledge and experience of its members at the service of parliamentary democracy in British Columbia and elsewhere,
- To serve the public interest by providing non-partisan support for the parliamentary system of government in British Columbia,
- To foster a spirit of community among former MLAs,
- To foster good relations between current and former MLAs, and
- To protect and promote the interests of former MLAs.



Our colleague Ian Waddell has agreed to stand for election as President. If elected, his energetic leadership at the head of a renewed executive will help the association take its activities, programs and actions to the next level. I believe the non-partisan voice and experience of former MLAs is needed now more than ever.

Whether is it speaking in schools, hosting webinars, or writing articles for local community newspapers, there is much former MLAs can contribute to civil society.

I encourage all of you to take an active interest in the AFMLABC. Connect with former colleagues and encourage them to join. Write a letter or short article for the Orders of the Day. Attend the annual dinner in 2021. Stand for election at the virtual AGM.

Finally, I would like to thank the Executive for their hard work and support over the past two years. It has been a privilege to be on this Executive. I would also like to thank Brian and Rob for their tireless efforts in publishing the best former MLA newsletter in Canada.

Be safe everyone!

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 for the newsletter.

Dues, Subscriptions and Donations

Ida Chong, Victoria

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.
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From the Editor's Desk

There are days when the Luddite in me shudders at the extent to which I have been dragged into the Zoom Zone, the Skype Scape, Google Gulch and Messenger Mania. Sadly, the universally revered coffee klatch and the time-tested get-together are endangered species. We have been consigned to a virtual world that is frighteningly efficient but void of human contact.

This year, the AFMLABC – like all other groups hobbled by COVID-19 – is being delivered into a digital realm unfamiliar to many of our former MLAs who find themselves, like me, longish of tooth and shortish on digital patience.

This year, there will be no AFMLABC AGM consisting of real folks sandwiched into a stuffy committee room in the BC Legislature. This year the AGM will be accessed via your laptop or iPad. Of all the virtual platforms available to us, outgoing president Jeff Bray has selected the one that is the most user friendly, Zoom. If you do not have Zoom downloaded on your computer, get going now and practice joining meetings. It's actually quite easy. Jeff's Zoom account can accommodate as many former MLAs as we can throw at it, so don't hesitate to join the party. Go to the back page of this issue for all the AGM-via-Zoom info you need.

I'll see you all on the silver screen Sept. 26th at 10 a.m.

In this issue I am pleased to offer articles from Grace McCarthy's daughter Mary and from Reverend and former MLA Tim Stevenson. Mary reminds us that one of Grace's most enduring legacies – the CH.I.L.D. Foundation – was created outside the Legislative Precincts and Tim ponders the pandemic and asks us to “discover a different way of telling stories from the same set of facts.”

My mail bag this past month included this nice note from Dave Laundy:

Dear Brian:

We continue to enjoy reading *Orders of the Day* and enclose a cheque to renew our subscription plus a small donation. Thanks for all your hard work on this publication. Jan and I are aging gracefully at Arbutus Ridge and enjoying life in the Cowichan Valley.

Best Regards
Dave Laundy
Cobble Hill

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(The late) Hugh Curtis

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.

Legislature dining room goes curbside

The public may not be able to access the Parliamentary Dining Room, but that doesn't mean the dining room can't access the public. Welcome to pandemic-inspired dining outreach.

When the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in March, dining room General Manager Dominique Boutin drafted a memo to her staff that government was suspending public access as well as all seated food services; catering and buffets were pretty much illegal.

"Still, I believed this was going to last two, maybe three weeks and all would resume ... life would return to its usual hustle and bustle. Denial is a tricky emotion, although irrational, it does help to cope with situations," Boutin says.

The Dining Room continued services for the few personnel who stayed behind with just Chef Nathan and Dominique for 11 weeks. "It got pretty lonely at times in our basement, but we made the best of it. Chef experimented with making different breads from scratch (no fancy bread maker here); he made sauerkraut, all kinds of different muffins and tasty treats; and I, being the supportive manager that I am, "taste tested" every delicious morsel. We were also proud to be supporting the Assembly staff in our small way," Boutin says.

Today, the dining room is still operating at limited capacity with no public access. "Allowing seated dining access to the public is a tricky process since we have to deal with the security component. Until the public is welcomed back, we have developed a curbside service for our loyal local clientele," the dining room GM says.

"The pandemic has forced some of us old school types to re-think a lot about how we do business. Fortunately, my team and I have had great support here at the Assembly, and I am confident we will come back from this. It won't be overnight, but it will happen."



Legislature staffer Kirsten takes an order

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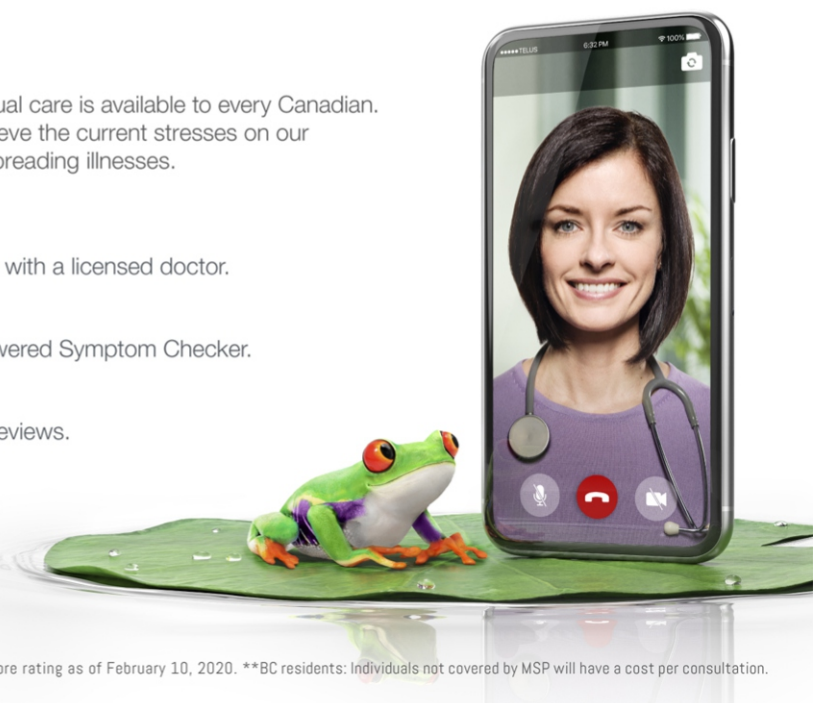
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Grace McCarthy's CH.I.L.D. Foundation celebrates 25 years

(Editor's note: The Foundation for Children with Intestinal & Liver Disorders (CH.I.L.D. Foundation) was founded by former MLA and cabinet minister Grace McCarthy, her daughter Mary and Lindsay Gordon in 1995 to find a cure through research for pediatric Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative Colitis and liver disorders, such as Biliary Atresia. Because of the CH.I.L.D. Foundation, children with Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD) are now not forgotten and medical practitioners and hospital administrators are now more attentive to children with these devastating illnesses. Before the CH.I.L.D. Foundation's inception, no IBD scientific investigators were working in BC. The CH.I.L.D. Foundation now funds scientific research investigators across Canada with one million dollars a year.)

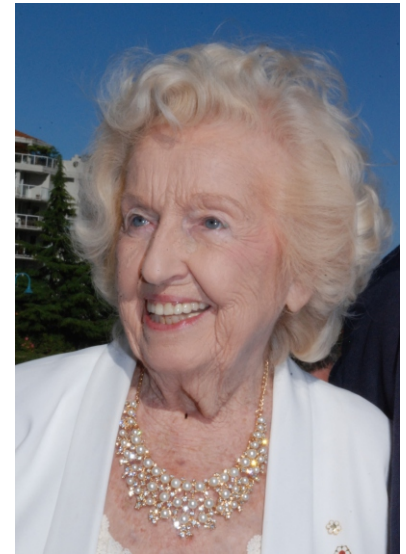
by Mary McCarthy Parsons



My Mother and I began the CH.I.L.D. Foundation after my daughter was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease as a young child. After taking her granddaughter across the world in search for information about the disease, we learned that Crohn's Disease had no cure. With no research scientists in British Columbia, we felt compelled to build the first laboratory at Children's Hospital to entice a top researcher. Little did we know that lab benches and microscopes cost millions of dollars.

Through extremely hard work and with the help of dedicated volunteers, my Mother raised \$3.5 million for our first researcher, almost singlehandedly. We established Canada's first endowed chair for pediatric research in IBD at the University of British Columbia. Because of the CH.I.L.D. Foundation, BC now has more than 20 researchers in three labs.

In the beginning, asking individuals and corporations for funding was not our forte and a new experience for us. One would assume that after 30 years in politics, Grace would have been a pro at asking people for money. But she never wanted to know what businesses and individuals supported her political campaigns. She thought if she knew, it would make her biased in giving out government funding. We built the CH.I.L.D. Foundation on a shoestring, and that shoestring mentality is still with us. All our fundraising events are produced by volunteers and we have been extremely fortunate to have amazing media support, loyal donors and dedicated



Grace McCarthy

corporate assistance. We want the money we raise to go to research, thus we are very frugal.

Grace wondered why we were re-inventing the wheel, discovering that many researchers were working on the same projects across Canada, needing expensive equipment, and were working separately and not using a collective knowledge. Through her insight, to achieve greater things by working together, the Canadian Children Inflammatory Bowel Disease Network of the CH.I.L.D. Foundation was born, with peer expertise generously given by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Twelve teaching hospitals with attendant gastroenterologists, nurses, and nutritionists across Canada are now working together, all because of Grace's determination. Because of our CH.I.L.D. Foundation Network, children can now have personalized medicine. Twenty-five years ago, children were given a host of adult "remedies" to see if they could bring some comfort to the constant diarrhea and agonizing pain, with grim side-effects that last a lifetime. Now, because of the success of our Network, personalized medicine has come about by testing a child's own diseased tissue before being tried on the children themselves. This personalized medicine is being fast-forwarded in BC and will significantly advance IBD research and treatment.

The Government of British Columbia has been so supportive of the crucial work being done by the CH.I.L.D. Foundation. Premiers Ujjal Dosanjh, Gordon Campbell and Christy Clark have all played important roles. Our Network simply would not have been as successful as it is without their support.

Fundraising is a key component of our revenue. For instance, it was Ian Waddell who graciously enabled our coin boxes in every government liquor store; this continues to this day. All public libraries have taken on our colouring book for children. Being Ambassadors for the CH.I.L.D. Foundation, the Canadian Forces Snowbirds perform their thrilling aerial show for an average of 60,000 spectators every summer in a different British Columbia community each year, raising awareness for the CH.I.L.D. Foundation.

We have lobbied provincial governments across Canada to ensure the high cost of maintenance drugs for children are covered by medical plans and lobbied for 'stool colour cards' in every hospital in British Columbia to forewarn new parents of the signs of liver disease in newborns. The CH.I.L.D. Foundation initiated the Canadian Biliary Atresia Research Network (CBAR), one of the first of its kind in the world. Liver specialists are now working together in Canada.

I am always overwhelmed and so grateful to our donors. Whether their donations are small or large, they enable us to help children and families deal with great pain and suffering. Because of Grace's foresight, the CH.I.L.D. Foundation is on a solid financial footing and will weather the COVID-19 storm because of devoted volunteers. I thank our dedicated volunteer Board of Directors and Governors and Scientific Research Advisory Council for their expert counsel. We pay for little and have an exceedingly small staff. We want the majority of funds to go to research, and to that end, the CH.I.L.D. Foundation gives a million dollars a year to pediatric research.

Twenty-five years ago, Crohn's Disease was not a household word. Young patients did not talk to their peers about their many trips to the bathroom; most children still do not go to school. Maintaining the CH.I.L.D. Foundation has been tremendously hard work – 'tis a tough gig to speak to service clubs over lunch about Inflammatory Bowel Diseases – but for us it has been a labour of love. We are determined to find a cure.

What matters most in our lives is HEALTH

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If we did not realize this before, we surely realize it now.

The CH.I.L.D. Foundation has been privileged to give **HOPE** to children with the debilitating illnesses of Inflammatory Bowel Diseases such as Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative Colitis and liver disorders.

Canada has one of the highest incidences and prevalence rates for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) **IN THE WORLD** and the rate of childhood-onset Crohn's Disease is steadily rising.

Of the thousands upon thousands of very ill patients, **25% are children that need our help.**

With all the medical interventions these children are accustomed to daily, their young systems are immunosuppressant which puts their lives at serious risk, particularly during the current health crisis.

The CH.I.L.D. Foundation has changed the research landscape in Canada. We now know that scientific investigators can achieve more by **WORKING TOGETHER.**

The creation of our Canadian Children IBD Network is making a huge impact around the world, bringing together nursing professionals, dieticians, clinical investigators, research scientists as well as patients and families, from twelve teaching hospitals across our Country, for the first time in Canada.

With generous partners from Fairmont Hotels and Resorts and the Capilano Group, we are offering you a wonderful prize to win at the end of this year. From your home, go online to child.ca to enter our amazing contest.

While at your computer or phone, consider a donation to help us work for a cure by raising funds for meaningful research and unprecedented awareness for very ill children.

The CH.I.L.D. Foundation urges you to also consider donating to other charities of your choice that also help vulnerable children in this time of health uncertainty.

All these charities have websites with **DONATE** buttons! We could not achieve what we do without the exceptional support of our dedicated donors and volunteers.

Because of your generosity, children living with Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative colitis and liver disorders now have more **HOPE** than ever that we are accelerating towards a cure.

The CH.I.L.D. Foundation offers you its deepest gratitude and wishes you good health and stability.

Thank You. TOGETHER we will find a cure.

The logo for CH.I.L.D. FOUNDATION features the word 'child' in a lowercase, rounded font with a red heart over the 'i'. Below it, the word 'FOUNDATION' is written in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font.

25 Years' Commitment
to Working For A Cure
child.ca

Former MLA Tim Stevenson ponders the pandemic

A friend sent me a poem by Aracelis Grimay for my 75th birthday, and the opening line has continued to haunt me: “What do we do with the knowledge that our living is not guaranteed?”

We have always known this deep down ... accidents and bad luck happen; death comes to each of us, and to all the people we care for and love. But, these days, the COVID-19 pandemic is making it painfully clear that our living is not guaranteed ... and not just my life, your life, anybody's life. What's under question is everything ... our social, political and economic arrangements; the whole shebang — how we make a living, how we enjoy our living.

Living with uncertainty is not easy. I want solutions, timelines, and I want to know what the new normal is going to be like — and when we will get there. Many people have bandied around the word “apocalyptic” as they talk about the impact of the coronavirus, counting the sick, the dead, especially in our neighbour to the south, wondering if we are looking at the unravelling of the American Empire. We have watched the economy grind to a near halt; the unemployment rate soar; government debt skyrocket. The road to recovery promises to be very rocky. Add climate change to the mix and we may well be looking at “end times.”

But in reality, the Greek word “apocalypse” simply means “revelation.” It is the moment of insight, of disclosure, the pulling back of the curtains so that we see our lives and our society in a new way; with a deeper honesty ... though we don't always like what we see. Maybe this is a moment to take a deep breath, to ponder what has happened ... and in the spirit of “revelation,” think about what we have learned during this pandemic.

COVID-19 has revealed the social and economic fault lines in our country — the insecurity of the “gig economy” and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few; the reality of racism (though we in Canada tend to a certain smugness, always comparing ourselves to the United States); the impact on gender equity in the work place (guess who's carrying the weight of home-schooling the kids?). What are we choosing to do about the almost-forgotten pandemic of opioid addiction and overdose fatalities? What reforms might be needed for better policing? What is the place of migrant workers? How are we choosing to care for our elders? It has been said that we may all be living through the same storm, but we most certainly are not all in the same boat!

Where have we found the strength to get through these last several months? Oh, we have discovered a variety of distractions (wine, Netflix), but more fundamentally, what or who has given us courage and resilience? Friends, family, leaders ... yes, sometimes. Is there something deeper ... a faith in our human capacity to endure, to rebound? Spiritual resources? What gives us hope? Have we discovered the limits of individualism, and the reality of our deep human interconnectedness? Think of front-line workers, from hospitals to grocery stores to nursing homes.



Reverend Tim Stevenson

Charles Eisenstein, in his article “The Coronation,” suggests that, “COVID-19 is like a rehab intervention that breaks the addictive hold of normality. To interrupt a habit is to make it visible; it is to turn it from a compulsion to a choice. When the crisis subsides, we might have occasion to ask whether we want to return to normal, or whether there might be something we've seen during this break in the routines that we want to bring into the future.”

Going around in my head these days is a line from a long-ago song — “What we do while we wait depends on what we're waiting for.” And I ask myself: “What am I waiting for?” Not a return to the old normal, that's for sure; but what will the new normal look like? Can we dream about a new future and imagine what needs to be done to change the world, remembering the words of Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Is this the moment to engage in the hard work of reconciliation? Can we imagine a different way of caring for our seniors? Of providing a decent, living wage for all workers? Should we be exploring the merits of a universal basic income? Can we learn to consume less for the sake of our neighbours around the world, for the sake of the earth? Can we demand that our governments and industries take climate change seriously and actually do something about it?

The Swiss-British philosopher Alain de Botton has said: “The difference between hope and despair is a different way of telling stories from the same set of facts.”

So yes, in these revealing, apocalyptic times let's look closely at what has happened. But then, instead of despair or cynicism or a failure of imagination, let us do some serious dreaming about a “new normal.”

Let's discover a different way of telling stories from the same set of facts.

(The Reverend Tim Stevenson was the MLA for Vancouver-Burrard from 1996 to 2001. He sat on Vancouver City Council from 2002 to 2018 as a member of Vision Vancouver. He was a founding member of Vision Vancouver and continues to serve as a United Church Minister. He was the first openly gay minister ordained in Canada in 1992 and the first openly gay MLA elected in BC.)

Canadians split on pandemic outcomes in the provinces

In nearly every region, approximately half of Canadians (52 per cent) feel their government has done a good job of balancing priorities, while 48 per cent disagree. Only in Atlantic Canada do residents commend their governments at a rate of three-in-five (58 per cent).

In Quebec (75 per cent), BC and Ontario (74 per cent each), significant majorities say their premier has done a “good job” handling the COVID-19 file. This drops to just over half when residents of Alberta and Manitoba weigh in.

Notably, in three provinces, BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, two-in-five residents desire more restrictions as opposed to fewer. Despite previous praise for its handling of the pandemic, BC now faces an upwardly trending curve, with several outbreaks linked to private parties. A return to previous restrictions is reportedly not in sight, as Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has instead emphasized the need for residents to better exercise preventative measures over the enforcement of regulations.



Alberta and Quebec residents are most likely to say that their province's restrictions are too strict. Quebec recently increased the maximum capacity of public gatherings from 50 to 250 people, the highest level in the country alongside New Brunswick.

(Source: Angus Reid Institute)

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Canada's elected are woeful at digital engagement

By Michael Morden

COVID-19 has marooned politicians and shuttered legislatures all over the world. For the foreseeable future, elected representatives are going to have dramatically less contact with the people they represent.

That probably isn't the first thing on your mind in this pandemic crisis — nor should it be. But the effects of COVID-19 are going to put real strains on representative democracy, which is already under pressure.

Most elected representatives are still most comfortable engaging constituents the old-fashioned way — face-to-face on doorsteps, at events, and in constituency offices.

The Samara Centre for Democracy has conducted exit interviews with parliamentarians for the past 10 years, and they frankly admit that while they would like to do more sophisticated forms of public engagement and make better use of (no-longer very new) digital avenues, they simply don't know where to start.

The centre's ongoing monitoring of Canadian democratic participation shows just how limited the uptake of digital engagement has been. There has actually been a decline in contact from political leaders in recent years, despite new tools and opportunities. In 2019, for example, 54 per cent of Canadians reported having been contacted by a party, candidate, or MP, down from 63 per cent in 2014.

And, while nearly all elected representatives are present on social media, most are using those platforms to broadcast, rather than to generate or sustain two-way conversations.

Considering the technological strides made in the past 25 years, it's amazing how little progress society has made toward realizing the potential of digital connectivity to enrich democracy. Part of this may be attributed to a dramatic shift in how we look at digital technologies.

A decade ago, we were enthralled by the emancipatory potential of social media. Embarrassingly so, given how social media has actually enabled surveillance, empowered authoritarians, and provided a platform for populist political performances that erode the trust foundations on which democracy is built.

But the pendulum swung hard in the opposite direction, and it's now an article of faith that the Internet is a problem for democracy to overcome.

Research and action on digital democracy generally means reacting against online harms — data theft, privacy violations, misinformation, harassment, and threats to electoral integrity. This work represents a badly needed response to real problems, and there's so much more to do. But as COVID-19 forces more of our day-to-day lives online, can't we also recover some of our original aspirations for the digital public sphere, even if we're somewhat sadder but wiser?

Well after the initial outbreak crisis begins to subside, the long tail of the pandemic will radically reshape how elected leaders are able to connect with their constituents. Our first ministers across the country have commanded the airwaves and communicated about the crisis in ways that are clear, calm, and frank. But our political class is much broader than that and founded on a strong culture of responsibility and good governance.

Canadian elected representatives at all levels and in all localities can play a useful role:

- First, in communicating high-quality information.
- Second, in collecting real-time feedback on how the pandemic response and economic relief measures are functioning in Canada's diverse local communities.
- Third, in helping sustain their communities and our democracy during this isolating moment.

They're the ones who must make energetic and creative use of digital platforms. But is constructive, pro-democratic digital communication even possible?

There are some promising leads to follow. For example, in recent years several American political scientists have experimented with online deliberative townhall meetings between citizens and members of Congress. Constituents are randomly selected to ensure a broad and representative sample of the community. Different formats have been explored, and a focused discussion on a single issue seems to yield the best exchanges.

The outcomes are encouraging. The research is still in its early stages, but there are indications that these exercises can help rebuild the relationship between representatives and citizens, reduce polarization, increase civic knowledge, and build trust.

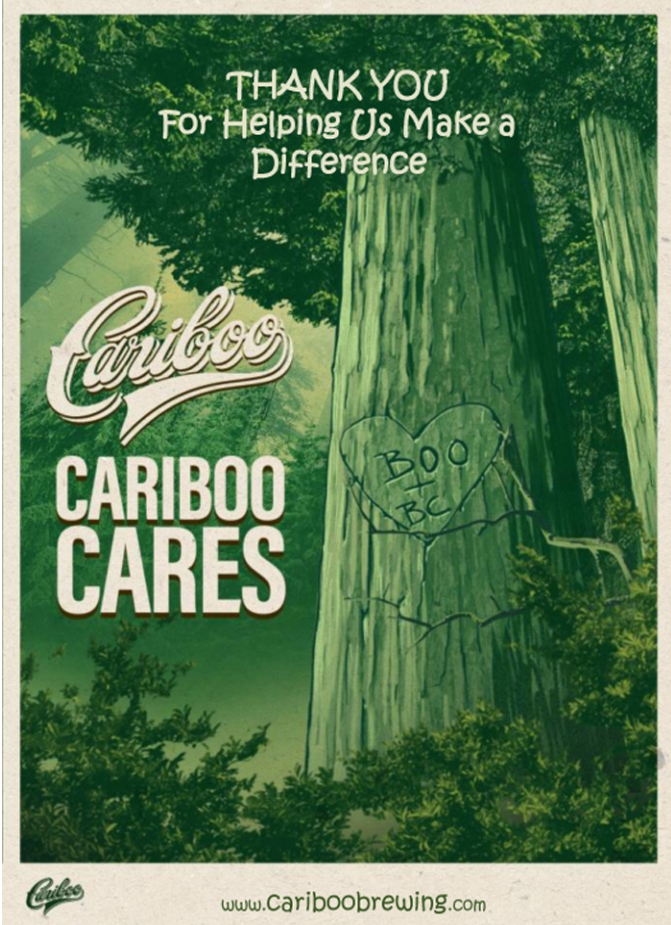


There are endless models and approaches to experiment with. Representatives can take it upon themselves to experiment with the tools available to them, staying mindful of inequities in digital access. Since the lockdown descended, there's already been an encouraging flurry of simple first steps among entrepreneurial representatives who are launching newsletters and podcasts, or hosting live video chats and telephone town halls. Ultimately, given the importance of design, the legislatures and the public sector should also help equip them with expertise and resources.

The point is that constructive, substantive, two-way digital conversations between elected representatives and their constituents are possible. The online politician doesn't have to sound like Donald Trump. The online citizen can meaningfully learn about and shape public decision-making.

In-person contact can't be replaced, but in the maelstrom and aftermath of COVID-19, we need to start finally unearthing the democratic potential of the digital public sphere. Leaders and citizens have been drifting apart for some time. Let's stay home and get to know each other.

(This column is an opinion by Michael Morden, research director of the Samara Centre for Democracy, a non-partisan charity dedicated to strengthening Canada's democracy.)



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HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES



When coal was king on Vancouver Island



By Jim Hume, The Old Islander

The troubles started in Extension, a small mining community a few kilometres south of Nanaimo in August 1912. Two coal miners were fired when they complained to management that unacceptable levels of explosive gas existed at the coal face. One of the workers headed north seeking a job in the mines of Cumberland only to find he had been blacklisted – not just in Cumberland, but throughout Vancouver Island.

When the Cumberland miners heard of his plight, they proclaimed September 16th, 1912 a study day and downed tools to discuss the challenge of already-hazardous working conditions. The following day they found themselves locked out and were informed they would remain locked out until they signed contracts vowing to end job action, quit their union, return to work and never again engage in trade union activity.

The agreements, contemptuously called “yellow dog” contracts, saw the Cumberland miners stay off the job – and every other miner at every other pit on the Island followed in support of what the history books would call Vancouver Island's Great Coal Strike.

It was a time when coal mining was the primary industry on the Island with large and small operations digging for the vital fuel from Ladysmith to Fort Rupert (Port Hardy). For months, mine owners were content to leave their mines silent, but by August 1913 – with stockpiles depleted and demand from ships, railways, and steam-driven heavy industry growing – they needed to get back into production. But their miners, concerned for decades about safety on the job as well as poor pay, were in no mood to compromise.

Their memories of a seemingly endless stream of disasters, from single deaths to the 150 dead in the Nanaimo No.1 mine explosion and fire in 1887, kept them implacable in their demands for greater safety. The workers were not always right in their beliefs or justified in their demands, which included an irrational ban on Chinese workers. But, their cries for more safety measures and better social conditions in the mining communities were hard to deny.

But, deny them the mine owners did and, with the tacit agreement, if not outright support, of government, they brought in small armies of strike-breaking miners from San Francisco and as far away as Italy. Striking miners living in mine-owned houses were ordered to vacate and were evicted by “special constables” if they refused. The strike breakers were to be the new occupants and were encouraged to defend what they were offered and provided with sticks and clubs and told to fight back when threatened.

In Europe, the First World War was raging with horrendous battle casualties. On Vancouver Island striking miners and imported strike-breakers engaged in mine-head or street corner clashes with miniscule fatalities but many broken heads and limbs.

On August 5th, a group of strike breakers attacked and stabbed a striking miner. The assailants were subsequently arrested, but only after demands from a delegation of miners who complained of double standards in the enforcement of the law. On August 11th, a large rally virtually took over Nanaimo to protest the presence of strike breakers, and the following day, 800 strikers and their families marched in a similar protest in South Wellington. That protest led to the expulsion of “the scabs” from the Wellington area and encouraged the protesters to march on to Ladysmith, where, as August 13th dawned, the protest turned violent.

When one protester began to sing “Hurray, hurray, we'll drive the scabs away,” he was arrested and jailed in Ladysmith. A report published by the Simon Fraser University Labour Studies Program tells us the miner was freed by his wife, “a veritable Amazon in build, vigour and strength” who rallied a group of strikers and marched to the jail where, “wielding an axe, she freed her husband.”

Rioting continued through the night with homes and other mine company property destroyed. It culminated in a bundle of dynamite being thrown into the home of strike breaker Alex McKinnon who was badly injured as he tried to protect his children from the blast. It took more than a year before two perpetrators were brought to trial, and it was revealed that they were neither strikers nor strike breakers but two citizens “who were drunk and had allowed their participation to go too far.” They were sent to prison.



On August 20th, 2011, when I first wrote about this, there was a day of remembering Vancouver Island's mining industry at the Morden Colliery Historic Park a few kilometres south of Nanaimo.

Morden had never earned a high degree of fame for production or notoriety on the mine-tragedy scale. And only the weather and time damaged head-frame at the pithead of Morden Colliery plus a few other structures remained as bleak ruined monuments of British Columbia's coal mining industry, gaunt reminders of the men who had worked the coal seams – and all too often, in their hundreds – died in the dark.

In April 2019, the provincial government approved a grant of \$1.4 million to restore and preserve the Morden Mine coal tippie, the only one surviving in Canada and one of only two remaining in North America.

It remains a work in progress but is open to visitors this summer. Google “Friends of Morden Mine” or go to

Facebook or Morden Colliery Historic Provincial Park for how to get there, and up to date visiting times. If you would like a fuller picture of what life was like when coal was king and coal barons brutal, find a copy of *Three Dollar Dreams* by Lynn Bowen – and understand why a restored coal tippie is a worthy monument.

(Editor's note: Built in the early 1900s by the Pacific Coal Company, the 22.5-metre concrete headframe and tippie structure is all that remains of the Morden Colliery. It's one of only two structures of its kind left in North America. It's built of concrete; all similar structures were of timber construction and were demolished or burned when the mines closed. “Morden Colliery Historic Provincial Park plays an important role in educating visitors about Vancouver Island communities' rich coal-mining history,” said Environment Minister George Heyman. “Conserving this site preserves a unique piece of our heritage and reminds us of the people who worked in the mines.”)

Question Period

offbeat news, humour, and things that make you go "hmm..."

Pakistani pigeon is no spy in the sky

SRINAGAR, India (Reuters) – Indian police have released a pigeon belonging to a Pakistani fisherman after a probe found that the bird, which had flown across the contentious border between the nuclear-armed nations, was not a spy.

“The pigeon was set free after nothing suspicious was found,” said Shailendra Mishra, a senior police official in Indian-administered Kashmir. It was unclear where the bird was released and whether it flew back to its owner.



The Pakistani owner of the pigeon had urged India to return his bird, which Indian villagers turned over to police after discovering it. “It’s just an innocent bird,” Habibullah, the owner of the bird, told Reuters. He rejected allegations that the numbers inscribed on a ring on the pigeon’s leg were codes meant for militant groups operating in the disputed region of Kashmir.

South Korea's Chaka rules in cereal democracy

SEOUL (Reuters) – It is being hailed as a major win for democracy in South Korea. After 16 years in exile, a president has triumphantly returned to claim his rightful place – on a box of green onion-flavoured cereal.

The Chex cereal sold out within two days following years of ceaseless campaigning by enthusiasts.

In 2004, Kellogg's Korea launched a marketing campaign for Chex, a five-grain cereal, asking South Koreans to vote on a new flavour.

Two cartoon candidates ran in the presidential election for the Chex Choco Empire – chocolate-flavoured Cheki and green onion-flavoured Chaka.

The PR stunt was meant to end in an easy victory for sweet Cheki. However, Chaka surged ahead in voting, catching Kellogg's unawares. The company halted online voting and declared Cheki the winner.

Chaka fans decried Cheki's 16-year rule as that of an illegitimate tyrant. Chaka remained a public hero depicted as a freedom fighter.

Walt and Mickey sign on the Rhode Island dotted line

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) – Rhode Island mistakenly sent more than 175 tax refund checks signed by Walt Disney and Mickey Mouse, rather than the state treasurer and controller.

The Rhode Island Division of Taxation uses the signatures on test files, which were mistakenly printed on the real checks and sent to citizens. “No other signature lines were printed besides the two,” said Jade Borgeson, chief of staff for the Rhode Island Department of Revenue.

The checks were tax refunds for corporate, sales and tax credits mostly to businesses. They were voided and new checks were signed by General Treasurer Seth Magaziner and State Controller Peter Keenan within a week.



The Legislature grounds are getting a new look

In 2019/20, the Legislative Assembly embarked on a multi-year Precinct Grounds Redevelopment Initiative. Phase One of the initiative began with the replacement of the 100-plus-year-old Front Ceremonial Driveway and new exterior wayfinding signage.

Randy Spraggett, the Legislature's Manager of Capital Planning and Development, says Phase Two of the Initiative – a landscape and security enhancement to the Belleville Street, or north edge, of the Legislative Precinct – is set to begin soon. The project will improve safety and security through landscape upgrade and improved pedestrian flow.

Capital Planning and Development, a new department in the Legislature, has been working with the City of Victoria and PWL Partnership Landscape Architects Inc., a BC -based landscape architectural firm, to create a concept design for this exciting new project.

In addition to encouraging greater public use and enjoyment of the Legislature grounds, the project will include features to protect against security threats. Key design features include:

- A widened sidewalk along Belleville Street.
- Seating edges, raised lawn and planted areas.
- The addition of a symbolic Pacific Dogwood tree.
- An enlarged area around the Cenotaph to accommodate large crowds during Remembrance Day ceremonies and other events.
- Retractable and stationary bollards to serve as a vehicle deterrent system and a design feature.
- Two new flag poles and interpretative signage as part of a First Nations Recognition Project.



50 years ago

A Russian freighter rams the Queen of Victoria

In the summer of 1970, the Queen of Victoria – one of the newest bigger vessels in the BC Ferry fleet – was sailing from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay when it was involved in a deadly collision in Active Pass.

The ferry was rammed on the port side by the Russian freighter Sergey Yesenin, killing three passengers despite attempts to avoid the collision. It happened around 11 a.m. and reports from observers indicated visibility was good and the tide was nearly slack.

Ken Warren was a young man moving to Victoria for a new teaching job. "It must have been close to noon time because I was having my lunch and then a Russian freighter impacted us so hard that pretty much anybody standing on the boat fell," Warren, now 82, told Global News.

The Queen of Victoria was carrying 626 passengers when it entered the narrow body of water between Galiano and Mayne Islands. The pass is only 400 metres wide at its narrowest point and features a blind corner, making it incredibly dangerous for passing vessels.

Upon approaching Active Pass, the captain made a radio call announcing the ferry's entry into the narrow waters and asked if there was any other traffic nearby. No one answered.

About a minute after entering Active Pass at full speed (15.5 knots), the ferry came face-to-face with the Soviet freighter Sergey Yesenin. The ship immediately reduced its speed, but it was too late.

"It was pretty well panic because no one knew what had happened," Warren said. "Women screaming, people trying to locate their children. People learning that we'd been hit by a Russian freighter."

Warren rushed down to his car to check his belongings before the crew shut off access to the lower decks. He said there was a lot of water down there streaming from broken pipes.

Warren remembers fellow passengers scrambling to get life preservers. Amid the confusion, many ended up with a life preserver that was the wrong size or didn't get one at all. Even the kitchen staff just left the burners on as they tried to get to safety.

Sheila Taylor, 17, of Allendale, New Jersey was standing near the ferry's main deck when the Russian freighter knifed



through the ferry's superstructure, crushing her to death. On a car deck, Mrs. George Hammond of Victoria had just stepped out of her Volkswagen, carrying her seven-month-old son Peter, when they were killed.

The Optimist at the time reported that Captain James Pollack, master of the Queen of Victoria, said the two ships could not communicate by radio because they were on different frequencies.

One witness said: "They tried to veer away, you could tell by the smoke. I guess they were in reverse and everybody was trying to stop. But there was no way, they were coming too fast."

A spokesperson for the Department of Transport said pilots took freighters through Active Pass, but only if conditions were favourable.

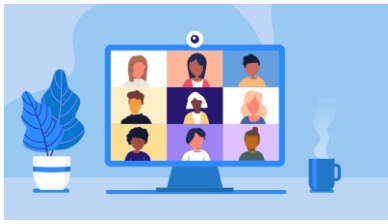
The 523-foot Yesenin was carrying steel products and cars to Vancouver from Japan. It was virtually undamaged in the crash.

It was the first incident of deaths in a BC Ferries accident.

A shocked premier W.A.C. Bennett said: "I am convinced it was not an intentional accident."

The Queen of Victoria was repaired and went back into service. An upper deck was added in 1981, and the vessel was part of the BC Ferries fleet until 2000. In 2001, she was sold to a company based in the Dominican Republic.

(Glacier Media and Global News)



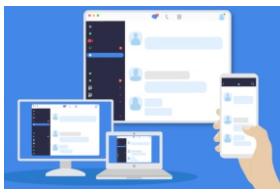
Zoom into the 2020 AFMLABC AGM

*You can
be there
virtually ...*



Saturday, Sept. 26th, 10 a.m.

The Executive has decided, out an abundance of caution, to conduct the AGM “virtually” this September via Zoom.



The good news is that this arrangement will make it easy for any number of Association members to “attend” and participate ... including in the election of Board Members.

To join the meeting open Zoom on your computer, click on “JOIN.” The meeting ID is 387 852 3779 and the password is 665017. Any problems linking up, email President Jeff Bray (jeff.bray@shaw.ca) and he will help you to connect.

The “virtual” AGM will be held Saturday, September 26th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

AGENDA

2020 Annual General Meeting

ZOOM Meeting

Saturday, Sept. 26th, 10 a.m.



1. Call to order – President Jeff Bray.
2. Quorum present? (five members required)
3. Moment of silence for friends we lost this year: Former MLA Ed Conroy and a great defender of good governance, Ted Hughes
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of 2019 Annual General Meeting minutes
6. President's Report on previous year – (Jeff Bray)
7. Finance Committee Report and Financial statements for period April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, and 2020 Budget
8. Membership Committee Report – Report on findings re University Scholarships initiated by the Ned Debeck Foundation – (Ken Jones)
9. Newsletter "Orders of the Day" report and financial update – Editorial Board
10. Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund Report and Youth Parliament Bursary determination – (Joan Barton).
11. Elections for 2012/2021 year: Nomination Committee report – (Jeff Bray)
12. Motion to authorize letters of appreciation to: Lieutenant Governor, Speaker, Clerks of Legislature, Legislative Library staff, others?
13. Next year's AGM and Dinner (Speaker, Location and Date). Other social events
14. Remarks by newly elected President (2019/2020)
15. Confirmation of Bank Signing Officers (currently: Kenneth Jones, Jim Gorst, and Jeff Bray)
16. Other business
17. Motion to adjourn