

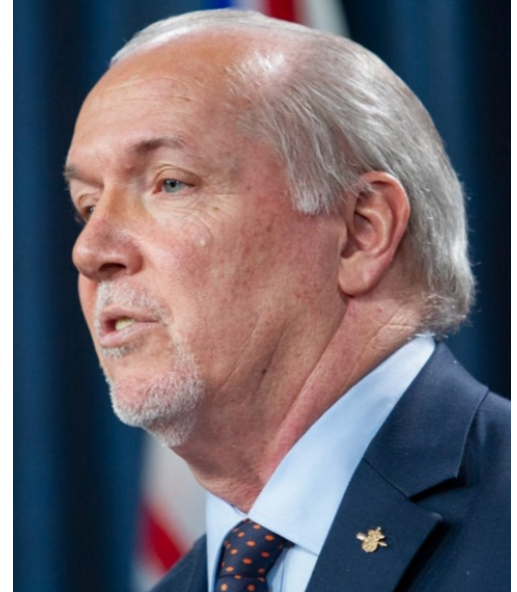
The Horgan legacy: We recognized ourselves in him

By Dr. David Black
Royal Roads University

No matter whether you voted for his party or liked his government's policies, you could recognize yourself in John Horgan. He is a person with a humble origin story who came to his party's leadership reluctantly and then, after the high drama of the 2017 election, found himself in a position of extraordinary responsibility. Being manifestly ordinary and relatable despite his eight years as NDP leader and five as premier was not just his charm but, as his resignation speech on June 28 illustrated, also the embodiment of his theory of government.

In that speech, his decision prompted by a second cancer diagnosis that had left him visibly transformed and introspective about the demands of the premier's role, Horgan spoke to the importance of cabinet government and why leader-focused politics was not for him. His message is one much needed as Canada's Westminster-style parliamentary democracy faces some unique challenges.

Inside, the executive function has become ever more presidential, with power concentrated in the PMO and premiers' offices, and party organizations and political media alike treating elected leaders as celebrities. Cabinets are consequently demoted, with ministers made to resemble order-takers rather than political actors with a measure of autonomy. A Lincoln-like "team of rivals" most Canadian cabinets are not.



Outside, the new conservative populism rages at a political class that can seem out of touch, a perception given credibility by this accumulation of power at the centre. MPs and MLAs with the confidence and agency to voice and act on constituents' concerns are in a better position to preempt the development of populism, dependent as it is on arguments that popular sovereignty has been betrayed by elites.

continued on Page 10

Legislative Library Archivist Suher Zaher-Mazawi needs your help



Meet Suher Zaher-Mazawi, the Archivist responsible for managing the MLA Papers Archives at the Legislative Library. In this issue, she is reaching out to retired MLAs to request your assistance. Her goal is to develop an archival collection to capture the less visible aspects of the political life and culture of British Columbians ... MLAs' personal political papers and constituency records that reveal the often-invisible underpinnings of issues facing communities in BC that may not necessarily be captured in the public records. "MLAs play a crucial role in the provincial political system. It is often challenging to trace their activities comprehensively, let alone find the relevant records, access them, and preserve them properly for future research," she says. Read all about this project on Pages 4 & 5. (Jeff Stinson photo)

Her Honour

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

Thank You and Miscellany

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

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

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

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

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

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Mary McCarthy Parsons, West Vancouver

From the Editor's Desk

It has been more than 30 years since the once-mighty Social Credit Party was reduced to an opposition of seven members by Mike Harcourt and the NDP. That was in 1991; today, there are not that many of the original Socred stalwarts left standing.

Sadly, we lost two bedrock Socreds this spring, Jack Weisgerber and Cliff Michael.

I want to thank former Socred cabinet minister Bruce Strachan – the AFMLABC's Board Secretary and a member of the OOTD editorial board – for helping me organize our tributes to Jack and Cliff on Pages 6 and 7. Thanks also to Eric Denhoff, who reminds us of Jack's ground-breaking work as the Zalm's choice to be BC's first native affairs minister.

The news this summer isn't all gloom and doom. Two items in this issue will be of particular interest to former MLAs: On Pages 4 and 5, there is news of a Legislative Library MLA Papers Archives project managed by Archivist Suher Zaher-Mazawi. She is reaching out to retired MLAs to help her develop an archival collection of MLAs' personal political papers and constituency records to capture the less visible aspects of political life and culture. Please participate.

On Page 15, you will find a report on the Member Survey conducted this spring to get your input as the executive plans for the 2023 AFMLABC annual bun toss. The consensus seems to favour tried and true Government House as the venue for this long-overdue reunion. The survey is still up in the News & Events section of our website (www.formerbcmla.com) in case you want to add your voice before a board decision is made.

It is rare in rambunctious BC politics for a premier to think of himself as a participant in a popularity contest. Regardless, pollsters like to play that game, and for the past few years, Premier John Horgan found himself on top, or near the top, of the heap. In light of his imminent retirement, Royal Roads poli-sci professor David Black bravely agreed to take the measure of the man and cast his eye down the NDP road ahead.

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

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

The President's Report

On behalf of the AFMLABC executive, I'd like to thank all those who responded to the Member Survey regarding the annual dinner. Your collective input will assist the OOTD executive in their discussions during the next meeting as we plan for our first post-COVID annual dinner in 2023.

You will see a summary of your input on Page 15. Suffice it to say, most would like to stay with the traditional format, time of year and venue. Unsurprisingly, there was strong consensus that the selection of a top-notch speaker is of utmost importance (suggestions in this regard would be most welcome!).

Recently, we learned of John Horgan's decision to step down as leader of the NDP and premier of BC. He has battled through a significant health challenge on top of monumental political challenges with COVID-19 and one can readily understand his decision to relinquish the very demanding role of premier. We all wish him the very best as he takes more time for himself and his family. We appreciate their service and sacrifice to our community and our province over the past several years.

As I write this, Boris Johnson has resigned as prime minister of Great Britain. From hero of an historic election victory to a shambolic demise in less than 30 months! It's been said that, for election winners, the hard part begins the day after the election. Johnson might agree, as his policies often seemed as disheveled as his coif.

Finally, we are all saddened by the recent passing of Cliff Michael and Jack Weisgerger. We extend our condolences to the Michael and Weisgerger families as they mourn the loss of their loved ones. You will find tributes to both Cliff and Jack in this issue.

Enjoy this issue and enjoy the summer!

John Les, President



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X-MLAs' constituency papers have a home at the Legislative Library

By Suher Zaher-Mazawi,
Legislature Library Archivist

My name is Suher Zaher-Mazawi, the Archivist responsible for managing the MLA Papers Archives at the Legislative Library of British Columbia. I am delighted to reach out to you through your newsletter *Orders of the Day* and request your assistance.

In 2017, the Assembly recognized the archival value of records created and received by elected officials in their official roles as representatives of BC's citizens at the Legislature. The MLA Papers Archives was established as part of the Legislative Library.

At the Library, we started acquiring personal papers and constituency records of elected Members who served in the Legislative Assembly of BC. Our goal is to establish an official repository of constituency records. To date, we have acquired 14 MLAs' collections; seven of those were received as part of the October 2020 election.

Our ambition is to develop this archival collection to capture the less visible aspects of the political life and culture of British Columbians. This would give us a more holistic view of the citizens' active participation and influence in the province's democratic governance process.

Whereas public records may offer evidence of government decisions and practices, MLAs' personal political papers and constituency records reveal the often-invisible underpinnings of issues facing communities in BC that may not necessarily be captured in the public records. As such, these records warrant long-term preservation.

In addition, such records are not being captured and preserved systematically. One may find such records scattered across various archival institutions in BC. Many constituency records are just destroyed at the end of an MLA's term. Our plan is to collect these records, particularly constituency records, and house them in one repository as a valuable collection for future researchers.

MLAs play a crucial role in the provincial political system. They have multiple and overlapping roles and responsibilities. It is often challenging to trace their activities comprehensively, let alone find the relevant records, access them, and preserve them properly for future research.



Archivist Suher Zaher-Mazawi arranges and chronicles archival architectural drawings at the Legislative Library. (Jeff Stinson photo)

Constituency records capture the day-to-day activities of Members. They document their interactions with constituents, represent the issues of the time, and exemplify the functions and role of the BC government at the constituent level. Records may consist of correspondence, meeting documentation, issues/subject files, casework files, speeches and position papers, publicity material, photographs, recordings, etc. Personal documents of MLAs capture their private activities as individuals with their interests, careers, activism, advocacy, and community engagements.

Both constituency records and personal records of former MLAs document the history of democratic participation in British Columbia. They provide unique insights into the legislative process and reflect each Member's contributions to that process and their relations with their respective communities. Such records also carry a rich historical significance and have enduring value for British Columbian citizens, policymakers, legislators, and scholars working in various fields.

Constituency records:

- Encourage accountability
- Capture less visible aspects of citizens' engagement in the provincial democratic governance
- Provide unique insights on Members' contributions to the legislative process in relation to their respective communities
- Bring a holistic view to the work done by elected officials
- Complement government information and records.

continued next page

Your contribution supports library goals

Other archival institutions have already acquired some records from former MLAs. Our goal is to create a comprehensive inventory of all former MLAs' records. This multi-year initiative aims to create a research guide that facilitates research in democratic participation at the local and community levels and within electoral districts in BC going back to Confederation.

The Legislative Library is seeking your attention and your help in answering the following questions:

1. When you closed your constituency office, what did you do with the constituency records?

When I closed the constituency office:

- a. I gave the constituency records to my successor MLA in the same riding.
- b. I donated the records to the following archival institution: _____.
- c. I destroyed all constituency records.
- d. I returned constituency case files to the relevant constituents.
- e. I don't remember what I did with the records.
- f. I still have all my records boxed and stored at my place.

2. Are you interested in learning more about the MLA Papers Archives and its ongoing development?

If you are willing to assist, we would love to hear your answers to the above two questions by emailing the Archivist at suher.zaher-mazawi@leg.bc.ca.



Or you can mail your information to:

Attention: Suher Zaher-Mazawi, Archivist
Legislative Library of British Columbia
501 Belleville Street,
Victoria, BC V8V 2L8

Your responses will be confidential and will assist us in planning our approach to developing a comprehensive strategy for constituency records collection.

In summary, the MLA Papers Archives complements the library collection and supports its mandate. It is intended to reflect and support the diversity that prevails in the Province of British Columbia, its constituents, and the Members who represented them at different points in time. The collection incorporates records on a range of political, economic, social, religious, and community issues. It also strives to support intellectual freedom and research by providing access to various perspectives, expressions, and experiences. This collection will open the gates to a new level of research at the Legislative Library.



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HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES



Jack Weisgerber passes away at 81

Jack Weisgerber, a former Social Credit cabinet minister who also sat in the Legislature as a member of the former Reform Party and as an Independent, died in June.



Jack, who was energy, mines and petroleum resources minister in the Social Credit government of former Premier Bill Vander Zalm and BC's first minister of native affairs, was 81 years old.

The three-term MLA represented the northeast riding of Peace River South from 1986 to 2001.

Former Social Credit MLA and cabinet minister Bruce Strachan said: "Following the disastrous Social Credit election loss in 1991, Jack found himself as leader of the seven-member Social Credit caucus – a tough place to be. The party faithful sought a return to the good old days, while the realists saw Liberal Gordon Campbell as the new voice of the centre-right. Jack toughed it out with a lot of class, finally running as an independent and stepping down in 2001."

In 1994, after failed attempts to revive the Socreds, Weisgerber and three other Social Credit MLAs left the party to join the Reform Party of British Columbia, costing the once-dominant Socred political juggernaut its official opposition status in the Legislature. BC Reform, as it was known, espoused similar policies to the Reform Party of Canada but was a separate entity.

At a news conference announcing his defection to Reform, Weisgerber said: "There is a tremendous vacuum on the conservative side of the political spectrum that stems from the collapse of the Socred coalition."

Weisgerber ran for the BC Reform leadership and was elected party leader in late 1994. Through 1995 and in the months before the 1996 election, Weisgerber faced challenges from some members of his party from southern Vancouver Island.

In the May 1996 election, the BC Reform Party won nine percent of the popular vote and two seats in the Legislature, one of which was Weisgerber's in Peace River South. However, the party failed to win the four seats required for official party status in the British Columbia Legislature. A split in the centre-right vote between Weisgerber's BC Reform Party and Gordon Campbell's Liberals is cited as a factor for the New Democratic Party winning the 1996 election.

Weisgerber quit the Reform Party in February 1997 to sit as an Independent in the Legislature.

Shortly after the 2001 BC election, in which he did not run, Weisgerber was appointed by then-Premier Campbell as a commissioner to the British Columbia Treaty Commission and represented the province on the BC Treaty Commission, the body that oversees the treaty negotiation process.

Weisgerber was also appointed to the board of directors of Crown-owned BC Hydro.

"Jack Weisgerber dedicated much of his life to serving British Columbians," Premier John Horgan said. "I'm very sorry to learn of his passing and extend my deepest condolences to his family and friends."

Liberal Leader Kevin Falcon said: "Jack leaves behind a legacy of service and commitment to our province. My sincerest condolences go out to his friends and loved ones in this difficult time."

Born in Barrhead, Alberta, in 1940, Jack was married to Judith Weisgerber (born Janke). They had two daughters, Joanne Wooldridge and Pamela Haglof; three grandsons, Josh, Luke, and Cole; and one granddaughter, Jemma.

Jack was BC's ground-breaking "Minister of Native Affairs"

By Eric Denhoff

I felt a great sadness with the passing of Jack Weisgerber, British Columbia's first minister of native affairs, who served as leader of two provincial political parties and was one of the nicest people you could ever meet.

Jack was as surprised as anyone to be named minister of native affairs. It was the result of a quirk in how then-Premier Bill Vander Zalm constructed his cabinet in 1988.

Vander Zalm decided cabinet should be appointed on the basis of ministers representing key regional zones around the province. Thus, Jack became Minister of State for the Nechako and Northeast. But the premier also wanted these ministers to have an area of responsibility such as highways or agriculture or health.

[continued next page](#)

So, he reasoned that since the northeastern part of the province, where Jack held his riding, was populated with a much higher percentage of Indigenous British Columbians than some other regions, he would make Jack the first minister of native affairs along with his regional ministerial role.

It turned out to be an inadvertent stroke of genius.

British Columbia was a province in transition when it came to recognition of Indigenous rights and title, particularly in moving British Columbia from its historical position of fobbing all responsibility for Indigenous issues off on the Government of Canada.

Indigenous rights and title were extremely controversial at the time and split the mostly-right wing Social Credit Party along urban and rural lines.

Jack, representing a very conservative rural riding, was able to bridge the gap between status quo conservatives and more progressive urban liberals within the party to achieve significant progress on the issues.

He built on the early success of Minister Stephen Rogers, who had the Native Affairs Secretariat, not a full ministry. Rogers had begun to explore new approaches to provincial relationships with First Nations.

Jack's motto might have been: "We have to change, and we have to move quickly, but not too much change and not too quickly!" Jack was a skilled politician both within his party and with the general public. He understood that

making a major transformation in BC policy required bringing not just cabinet and caucus on side but also the public in general, who were conditioned to believe that either there were no Indigenous rights or, if there were, they were the responsibility of Canada.

By skillfully moving various policy and program pieces through cabinet and caucus, Jack placed BC at the modern-day treaty negotiating table for the first time in history and implemented a series of initiatives aimed at economic and social development.

Jack had a remarkable and self-deprecating sense of humour and loved to poke pompous colleagues and bureaucrats in a wonderfully mischievous way. While he played the 'aw shucks, good ol' boy from Dawson Creek' with effect, he was, in fact, a sophisticated, highly intelligent and superbly human individual who just left all around him better for being in his presence.

Jack and I disagreed on many policy matters, but he was never disagreeable and always willing to listen with an open mind.

BC has been very fortunate to have had a leader like Jack in politics.

(Eric Denhoff served as a deputy minister and a chief negotiator in Alberta's and BC's public sectors in the areas of environment, climate change and aboriginal affairs.)



Former Social Credit keener Cliff Michael dead at 88



Former Social Credit MLA and cabinet minister Cliff Michael passed away in May at age 88 leaving behind a legacy as a proud resident of Salmon Arm and a dedicated community leader.

Cliff was personnel manager at Federated Co-op and went on to represent the Shuswap-Revelstoke riding as an MLA from 1983 to 1991. Cliff served BC in key cabinet portfolios: Minister of Transportation, Minister of Tourism and Minister of Governmental Affairs.

He will be remembered for his help developing the Salmon Arm Indoor Sports Complex and Shaw Centre, as well for his work with the Rotary Club and the many accomplishments as a politician.

Former MLA and Cliff's Social Credit colleague Bruce Strachan said: "As you can read above, Cliff was fully engaged in his community. Enthusiasm was his hallmark. In caucus and in cabinet Cliff always walked into the room with a new and exciting idea.

"Visiting him in Salmon Arm was a whirl wind of BBQs, Shuswap boat rides and local highlights. He focused solely on making BC a better place to live."

Cliff is survived by his devoted wife Dilys, son Milton, daughter Colleen (Tim), stepchildren Kim and Rock, grandchildren Julia, Waylon, Courtney (Timothy), Hayley (Cedrik), Kevin (Lesley) and great-grandchildren Makayla, Jasmine, Kurt and Damien, as well as siblings Patsy, Sandra, Gladys, Gordon, Paul and the late Don and Joan.

(Source – Salmon Arm Observer)

"The people that write the history own it" – Bob Williams

By John Ackermann

From his working-class roots in Burnaby and East Vancouver to becoming an alderman, an MLA, then a cabinet minister, and later a top bureaucrat as head of ICBC, Bob Williams has led a life full of achievements, many of which we now take for granted.

Now, at the age of 89, he has just finished committing his remarkable story to paper in his new autobiography, *Using Power Well: Bob Williams and the Making of British Columbia*.

"The people that write the history own it, so I'm developing a bit of ownership. A little late, but better late than never," he says.

Williams is perhaps best known for serving in BC's first NDP government back in the early 1970s. In its short 39 months in power, that administration passed a dizzying amount of legislation not seen before or since, much of which is still around today. As the last man standing from that era, Williams admits to feeling a sense of obligation to go on the record.

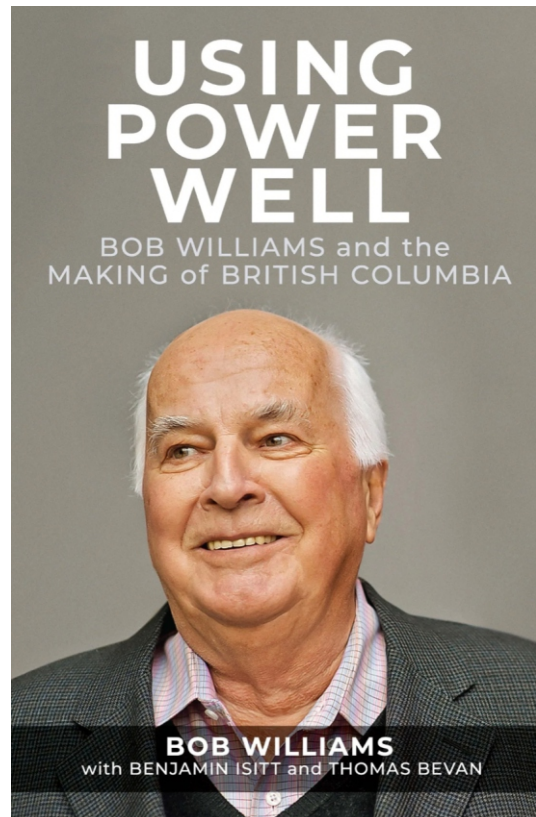
"I did feel the story hadn't been fully told," he says. "The little group that founded that government in '72 to '75 under Dave Barrett was an extraordinary gang of folks, and it was a joyous place to work and create new policy for the province."

Some of the innovations Williams had a hand in include ICBC, the province's public auto insurer, and the Agricultural Land Reserve, which preserves farmland even now.

"You know, it's one of the great successes of that administration. I don't think there's any doubt about that," he says. "And it's a pleasure to go out in the [Fraser] Valley and see all the housing out in Abbotsford up on the mountain and nothing on the farmland below. It's pretty impressive."

A recurring theme is power: Who has it and how to use it. Williams learned that lesson early. His first job out of high school was at the Sewers Department in the City of Vancouver. As he quips in the book, he didn't start at the bottom; he started below the bottom!

"So, I was at the counter in the Sewer Department on the fifth floor at City Hall and watched people coming and going. I got to sense the power structure and how it all worked. The city engineer had his own elevator, and he was also physically the biggest guy in the building. So, you start [seeing] the patterns, and everybody jumped when the city engineers said jump," he explains. "But the only ones that



didn't were two of the big corporations, private corporations, the [Canadian Pacific Railway] and the old BC Electric, who were there before [BC Transit]. So yeah, it was a great watching spot."

That experience would serve him well in his next position. His first foray into elected office would be as an alderman on Vancouver City Council in 1964. As an East Van kid, Williams thought it important to have the city's east side represented at the council table.

"Yeah, there had been no representation from East Van since the '30s. I ran a separate campaign on the east side saying, 'Vote for Your Side,' and on the west side I said, 'Vote for a Young Planner,' and both the slogans worked," he says.

Here too, Williams would learn about the use of power. "Some of the ultra right-wingers on council couldn't believe what I was able to pull off," he says. "I mean, believe it or not, tenants couldn't run for public office in those days. I got a motion through council, through the Legislature, so renters could run to be city councillors. It's hard to believe [now] when so many rights are well established, but I'm old enough to know there was another time."

continued next page

Williams served one term as an alderman before Victoria came calling. He was part of a new generation of legislators that arrived in the provincial capital in the 1966 election. Williams remembers feeling quite the culture shock in the transition from municipal to provincial politics.

"Office conditions, for example. There were a dozen of us, and we were in one room. And so, we had a big table in the middle, and we separated it with law books to create a little bit of privacy at our own desks. And that was it. I decided that I wasn't going to accept that kind of nonsense.

"W.A.C. Bennett, the premier, walked by our office on his way to the Legislature every day. I said: 'Hey, I'm not going take this.' I was told: 'Hey! Young pup! Get used to it. It's what we get.' And I said: 'No, I'm moving my office out in the corridor. To hell with this.' So, I moved the books, table, secretary and telephone, and the old man almost tripped over my desk as he went to the Legislature. We got new offices right away. That was a sign of times changing."

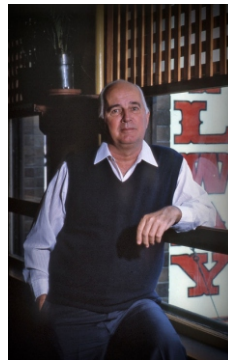
By 1972, Bennett was out, replaced by Dave Barrett and BC's first NDP government. Barrett appointed Williams his Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources. For all its accomplishments, Williams thinks the Barrett government is misunderstood, even now.

"I don't think any of the political scientists have figured it out. Nor do I think they've been very interested," he explains. "I've never been interviewed, given my history, for example."

Besides ICBC and the Agricultural Land Commission, Williams had a hand in other legacies that are still around today. The SeaBus, linking Downtown Vancouver with the North Shore, and the Lonsdale Quay development on the North Vancouver waterfront came together almost hand-in-hand.

"A naval architect in Victoria came into my office one day, and he had this plan for a SeaBus, and he thought that it could alleviate the idea of a new bridge across [Burrard Inlet]," he explains. "And so, I passed him on to Jim Lorimer, the minister for transit. He was hired, and we had the SeaBus running in no time, and it's been a great achievement. But it also meant we had to look at the North Shore. And so, I ended up acquiring quite a bit of the waterfront right at Lonsdale. And, as a result, ICBC is there, and now there's a great art gallery there [too]."

What isn't as well-known is the fact Williams had wanted ICBC headquartered in Kamloops, not North Vancouver.



Williams at the Railway Club

"Kamloops has suffered unfairly against Kelowna. It really should be the dominant city of the southern Interior. But because the Bennett family has owned Kelowna for generations, most everything has gone there, including the highway system. So, that's still a battle to be fought," he chuckles. "In the case of ICBC now, I'd move it to Surrey City Centre."

Developing Whistler and Robson Square are also points of pride for Williams.

Williams kept busy outside of elected office. He bought the Railway Club in downtown Vancouver and owned it for 30 years. And once the NDP returned to power in the 1990s, Williams became a "super" bureaucrat, heading up ICBC from 1998 to 2001 while overseeing Surrey's Central City development at the same time. He also served on the board of the VanCity Credit Union.

Williams also has thoughts on the current NDP government under Premier John Horgan.

"They've not been dealt the best cards in the deck," he says. "I hadn't realized that some of the health problems were as serious as they are. And for the NDP, that's not acceptable."

As Williams writes in the book, the job of a good politician is to use power well. "It's [about] being freed to use the best of your ability as you apply yourself to the problems," he says. "[And] how much we actually can do, if we just free ourselves and understand and talk to one another."

Using Power Well: Bob Williams and the Making of British Columbia by Bob Williams with Benjamin Isitt and Thomas Bevan is available from Nightwood Editions.

(John Ackermann is the Afternoon Anchor at CityNews 1130 in Vancouver.)

Horgan showed us you can be popular and not populist

By Dr. David Black

This political science lesson brings Horgan's legacy into focus in three ways.

First, he's shown that you can be popular without taking up populism. Popularity here means not just being likable – while a welcome trait, it's not necessary in a successful leader, as Stephen Harper proved. Rather, it's the old-fashioned virtue of being someone the public genuinely believes has their interests at heart and can listen to and learn from them. Populism is a caricature of such popularity, with leaders often performative rather than genuine in showing their fealty to the public.

Second, Horgan, a career civil servant and political staffer before his 2005 election to his West Shore riding, exemplified the good that government can do at a time when, across Western democracies, there is cynicism about small-l liberal institutions and values. As premier during the pandemic, Horgan's faith in government's capacity to accomplish things no other societal institution can do was put to the test. Given the province's superior public health results relative to many of its provincial peers, our government passed the test.

Third, and specific to the NDP's fortunes going forward, Horgan lent his moderation to the centre-left formula that helped earn the NDP a party-record 48 per cent popular vote share in the snap election of 2020. Given that British Columbia's political compass has historically swung to free enterprise parties 80 per cent of the time in post-war era elections, the magnitude of that majority victory and surprising NDP gains in reliable BC Liberal seats in the Lower Mainland may speak to structural changes in voting preferences that redraw our political geography.

The NDP's leadership contest, to be decided this fall, now has to favour Attorney-General David Eby in view of leading would-be contender Jobs Minister Ravi Kahlon's decision to endorse Eby while not running himself. But the BC Liberals, soon to re-brand under a new name more suitable to the bigger tent they want to pitch to better accommodate their coalition of centrist Liberals and right-leaning Conservatives, have in Kevin Falcon their own highly capable leader.

Falcon comes from the right of the party, with a string of senior ministerial appointments under premiers Gordon



Campbell and Christy Clark before he left politics for the private sector in 2013. Falcon's reputation as a passionate defender of fiscal conservatism and market-based policy should make the next two years until a likely October 2024 election lively and idea-driven in the best tradition of the province's spirited politics.

That said, the current government has some difficult and ill-starred decisions behind it – Site C, the Royal BC Museum – and stubborn and complex problems ahead, such as the doctor shortage, housing affordability, the opioid crisis and money laundering. The end of the pandemic will also mean that voters will not be so readily looking to government as that friend who has your back. The North and the Interior remain a BC Liberal stronghold, and the NDP struggles to find a message for rural voters and BC Green Party supporters.

But whatever happens, John Horgan's life in politics is a lesson for anyone who cares about parliamentary democracy in Canada, regardless of party affiliation. A measure of democracy should be welcome inside cabinet and caucus too. The Westminster system's processes and customs matter as much as the leaders or other elected representatives who put them to work. And, as an occasionally ill-tempered Horgan might agree, cults of personality have no place when it's fallible human beings who tread the corridors of power.

(Dr. David Black is an associate professor in the School of Communication and Culture at Royal Roads University, where he teaches political communication. He's a frequent commentator on politics for various media outlets.)

The most important forces of change go beyond leaders

By Jolene Rudisuela
The Capital News

Victoria's Capital Daily and the Southern Vancouver Island United Way recently hosted two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and long-time New York Times political commentator Nicholas Kristof.

Weaving in stories from his decades of covering war, genocide, and poverty, Kristof detailed five lessons he has learned on how we can all change the world – in big ways or small.

"The most important forces of change go beyond leaders," he said, adding that while leadership matters, so do a lot of other social forces.

Lesson 1: Education changes everything

Kristof spoke at length about the importance of education – a theme throughout the talk. Education, he said, puts people on the right path and slows the cycle of poverty and addiction in disadvantaged communities.

The gap in education in some parts of the world – especially between girls and boys – is striking, but it is not quite as pronounced, or at least as visible, in North America.

Kristof recalled a school in an impoverished Chinese village that received funding for educating girls thanks to an article he wrote. At the time, many families were sending their sons to school but not their daughters because of the cost of tuition. Years later, looking back at the impact of that funding, the village's well-being had increased more than any of the other communities in the region. More people were able to return and support the village.

Lesson 2: Talent is universal, but opportunity is not

On the theme of education, Kristof emphasized that it is often circumstance that leads to poverty and addiction.

He pointed to working-class communities that are tied to industries subject to unpredictability or that are being phased out. Members of these communities often struggle with unemployment and poverty due to a lack of opportunity. Some may self-medicate.

Kristof said that more opportunities and grants to retrain workers and get them back into the workforce are essential to give opportunities back to these communities.

Lesson 3: Side by side with the worst of humanity, you find the best

The thing that has kept Kristof going through decades of reporting on human rights and social issues is the human strength of people who have been challenged in ways that we have not.



While we often focus on the negatives, there are countless stories of people advocating for change and of real progress around the world.

Globally, nearly half of humans died in childhood as of 1950. As of last decade, that statistic has dropped to four per cent.

Fewer than 10 per cent of the global population lives in extreme poverty as of 2015, versus 42 per cent in 1981.

There has been a 60 per cent decline in teen pregnancies since the recent peak in the '90s.

Good things are happening, and we shouldn't get lost in the negatives.

Lesson 4: For solutions, don't think silver bullets; think silver buckshot

Complex problems can't be solved with one easy solution; it takes a coordinated effort with various approaches to address issues like homelessness and addiction in communities.

Kristof listed ways to address these issues that have worked in other countries and cities that could be applied locally. To reduce homelessness, more housing is needed, and lengthy processes to build that housing slows down progress and raises costs. Everyone who is unhoused should be accounted for, and long-term issues like education and job training need to be addressed to ensure everyone can afford housing.

Addressing mental health and addiction is also essential to reducing homelessness, but that needs a multifaceted approach. Kristof spoke of the importance of having accessible treatment and long-term programs. While he thinks that decriminalizing drug use does help get people into treatment, far more treatment options need to be available.

Lesson 5: Don't scoff at drops in the bucket

Sometimes it can feel like individuals don't have the power to create change, but Kristof argued that we do. We don't have to solve a larger problem to make a difference. While a small donation won't solve the education disparity in the Middle East, it can send a girl to school for a year.

Being a politician in “the Age of Conspiracy”

By Charlie Angus
Writing in *Policy Magazine*

New Abacus Data polling reveals some pretty sobering findings on the state of the Canadian political landscape. According to the survey, 44 per cent of Canadians now believe that a secret group of elites is controlling elections, recessions and wars. Thirty-seven per cent are inclined to believe the racist “white replacement theory.” The poll also found that 13 per cent think Bill Gates is tracking us with microchips, while another 21 per cent are unsure if he is actually doing it but believe such things are possible.

The Abacus polling is the first deep dive into the state of Canadian thinking since the convoy blockades last February. The numbers are shocking, but I doubt any elected official would be surprised. The propaganda vortex of politicized conspiracy theories is now part of our political landscape.

The Abacus poll was released the same week. I participated in a briefing by the Parliament Hill security office addressing rising threats of physical violence to MPs and their staff. Over the years, I have held countless public events, community forums, roundtables, and pub nights. I pride myself on being able to read a room and find common ground with people regardless of their political views. That's what elected representatives do. In the post-COVID/blockade world, however, that common ground is slipping away, and I can no longer count on my political sixth sense when meeting people in public because the conspiratorial mindset fed by disinformation doesn't fit into a simple profile of age, class or demographic.

Parliament Hill security is advising elected officials to scope out public events before entering, to be briefed in advance on potential threats, and to have an escape plan in case things go wrong. The security experts admitted that the toxicity, rage and threats faced by elected officials have become so amped up it's difficult to come up with workable solutions.

The blockade was the breakthrough moment for rage as a political force. This was when Canadians saw the real-time implications of both conspiracy theories and actual conspiracy. This wasn't just a bunch of angry people honking horns. It was the first muscle-flexing of a very well-organized, well-funded, decentralized force. Their capacity to engage with Canadians across the country was formidable. They had the propaganda skill to knit together all manner of anti-vaxx and anti-globalist paranoia into a bizarre satire of Canadiana, complete with hockey sticks and hot tubs.

The Abacus polls suggest this was not simply a one-off case of late-winter madness. Let's take the Abacus findings

of the willingness to believe that secret insiders are controlling our lives. I remember the moment I got dragged down the rabbit hole of the World Economic Forum (WEF) conspiracy theory. During the blockades, I was suddenly inundated with messages from retired teachers, young mothers and angry dads about how Klaus Schwab and the WEF controlled the Trudeau government. The speed with which this theory moved from the margins of Reddit chat forums to becoming an apparent obsession with all manner of ordinary Canadians was staggering. And then it was being validated in Parliament.

On February 19, MP Colin Carrie used his time during a debate to make claims about Klaus Schwab and his “subversive” organization “infiltrating” the Liberal government. I called out Carrie for using Parliament as a place to promote disinformation. That intervention touched off a barrage of backlash. Within the hour, my office was overwhelmed with calls, threats and abuse, accusing me of being an agent of the WEF trying to shut down the truth. We still get calls every day.

Admittedly, MPs' offices have always attracted strange and fringe calls. Pressure campaigns come and go, but this one seems to have a determination and capacity to maintain the volume. And the polling suggests it is now becoming normalized within mainstream Canadian views.

Perhaps this is why some Conservative leadership candidates have spent so much time promoting conspiracy claims. Maybe the Conservatives think they will be able to harness the tactical rage of this phenomenon to the faux outrage of political theatrics.

But given the Abacus polling, we need to ponder whether we are facing a more existential crisis in democracy. Is it possible to engage the public in important discussions about the future of Canada and the well-being of Canadians if they are convinced the media lies to them and their elected representatives are merely a front? How does one respond to a constituent if we can't even agree on what is reality? If we cannot trust medical science in a pandemic, how can we possibly come together to address larger existential threats like the climate crisis?

The Abacus poll suggests a major rewiring of the public mind is underway.

We ignore this rewiring at our peril. Everyone needs to be concerned and remain vigilant about the integrity of the very foundation of our democracy.

(Charlie Angus has been the NDP Member of Parliament for Timmins-James Bay since 2004.)

MPs get panic buttons after minister gets death threats

MPs are being given panic buttons to increase their personal security in response to threats and rising concerns about harassment of Parliamentarians.

Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino recently revealed that he received several death threats on social media after introducing a bill in Parliament bringing in gun controls to prevent gun violence. The posts from an account entitled "eliteterrorist" include: "Somebody's gonna shoot you to death." Another death threat contained a derogatory term for a person of Italian descent.

"Threats, including death threats, have no place in this debate," Mendicino said. "It is essential that we are able to have vigorous debates about this, making sure that these debates are had in a way that is civil and free from any kind of threats, intimidation and downright criminal behaviour that we are seeing increasingly online."

Mendicino said he, the police and the Parliamentary Protective Service are reassessing the security of MPs after a series of threats and intimidating incidents.

That includes the verbal harassment of NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh during an Ontario election campaign event. A video shows that as Singh left a campaign office, he encountered protesters who could be heard shouting expletives at him and calling him a "traitor." Singh has said the experience in Peterborough was one of the worst incidents of aggressive behaviour he's experienced in his political career.

Among the measures being rolled out to boost protection for MPs are panic buttons, or "mobile duress alarms." MPs can carry them around to immediately alert the Parliamentary Protective Service or local police for a rapid response.

In a presentation to Liberal MPs about new security measures, the sergeant-at-arms strongly recommended that they keep their panic buttons with them "at all times."

The device can be used across Canada, including in MPs' home constituencies. The sergeant-at-arms, who is in charge of House of Commons security, is offering training to MPs and staff on how to de-escalate potentially violent situations.

Parliament is also offering MPs security assessments of their constituency offices and homes and says it can install alarms, panic buttons, cameras and other security measures as necessary. The security assessments follow several threats to MPs and incidents in the past year. At a campaign event during the last election, a handful of gravel was thrown at Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau outside a political rally.

Mendicino said it's part of his mandate to "ensure that all parliamentarians have the security they need." He said he's working closely with law enforcement, the sergeant-at-arms, the Parliamentary Protective Service and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc to "constantly" reassess "the risk to parliamentarians."

He said people who threaten and intimidate must be held accountable to avoid a chilling effect on free speech, which would be "a threat to our democracy."

"We will obviously continue to flag those criminal posts to the platforms," he said, adding that the authors of these posts should suffer serious consequences, such as being expelled from platforms.

(Sources - Canadian news services)

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 The Hugh Curtis BC 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. Click on "Giving" in the navigation bar and then on "Make a Donation." After that just follow the prompts to find The 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

Government House gardens join "100 Garden Moments in Canada"

The gardens at Government House have been named one of 100 Garden Moments in Canada, recognized as part of celebrations for the 2022 Year of the Garden.

The list will serve as the basis for Canada's Garden Hall of Fame, curated through a jury and the Canadian Garden Council.

As noted on the 100 Garden Moments list, the gardens at Government House were created in 1911. David Lam, 25th lieutenant governor of British Columbia, initiated a garden volunteer program (which evolved into a society in 1992) to enhance the existing gardens, create new gardens, and improve the maintenance of the grounds for public use and enjoyment.

Today, The Friends of Government House Gardens Society maintains and supports the gardens.

While most of the 400-plus "Friends" work in the gardens, non-gardening members contribute thousands of hours in many ways, including support for Government House archives and special events, at Rudis Tea Room and curating and running the onsite Costume Museum.

"The gardens at Government House are a wonderful treasure that I am delighted to share with visitors locally and from all over the world," says Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. "I am grateful for the recognition from the Canadian Garden Council of the significance of our gardens, thanks largely to the extraordinary stewardship from The Friends of Government House Gardens Society volunteers, whose dedication enhances the magic of this beautiful landscape."

For those wanting to visit the gardens at Government House, the grounds are free and open daily to the public from dawn to dusk. Food, refreshments and picnics are available for takeout at Rudis Tea Room, located onsite in the Cary Castle Mews. Rudis is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Quick Facts:

- G.K. Maclean, who designed the Government House gardens in 1911, was a landscape architect from Vancouver.
- Following the devastating fire in 1957 that destroyed the original building and much of the gardens, Robert Savery, a British-born and educated landscape architect, updated the gardens' design in the style of traditional English gardens.
- The grounds of Government House include 36 acres of manicured gardens and native ecosystems divided into different zones according to plant life and garden style, with a 22-acre native Gary oak ecosystem known as the Woodlands.
- Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, up to 17 gardeners worked on the property, including a live-in superintendent, and many plants were grown in an onsite greenhouse.
- The revitalized gardens, and the work of the Friends, were dedicated in 1994 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, during a visit to Government House.
- Support for the gardens also comes from the Government House Foundation, created in part to foster the preservation of Government House and its grounds and to enhance its decor, character, maintenance, and historical and cultural values.
- To celebrate and honour Canada's Year of the Garden 2022 and mark the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association, the Canadian Garden Council has identified 100 Garden Moments of Canada that have contributed to the development of Canada's garden culture and its ornamental horticulture sector.
- The 100 Garden Moments of Canada are the foundation of the Canada's Garden Hall of Fame, a legacy project of the Year of the Garden 2022 to honour and celebrate events and Canadians that have contributed to Canada's garden culture.



Member survey: Solid support for traditional Government House event

Members of the AFMLABC are split roughly 50/40 about the location of the 2023 annual association dinner, with the traditional Government House venue in Victoria winning by a whisker.

For many years the highlight of the AFMLABC social calendar has been the annual banquet. That came to a grinding halt in 2020 when COVID-19 turned our lives upside down, and the gathering at Government House was cancelled. It was cancelled again in 2021 and this year.

To ensure the 2023 gathering is one to remember, the executive wanted input from the membership. The OOTD newsletter and www.formerbcmla.com featured a member survey that asked several questions. Should the 2023 event be held at Government House or somewhere on the Mainland that is accessible to the majority of members? When is the best time for a get-together ... October as usual or perhaps in the spring, April or May? Should the evening feature a full, formal, sit-down dinner, as has been the case at Government House, or would a more casual hors d'oeuvre/finger food presentation be more appropriate? Is a prominent speaker important? If so, any suggestions? And finally, bar service at Government House has been hosted at the association's expense. Would a no-host bar be acceptable?

Fifty per cent of survey respondents support a return to Government House, and much of that support came from former MLAs based in the Interior. Almost 40 per cent of respondents favour a dinner in Vancouver. The balance of respondents are content with either location or favour alternating between Government House and a Vancouver venue such as the Terminal City Club.

One former Lower Mainland MLA wrote, "Victoria or the Mainland makes no difference to me. I know that former Association President Ian Waddell thought that if we had it on the Lower Mainland, we would get more MLAs to attend. I am not sure about that. Those who may not attend a Vancouver event are the non-MLA folks based around Victoria who usually reserve a couple of tables. However, if costs are down, that may not matter. We might not get the Lieutenant Governor to come to Vancouver, but maybe we would get a high-profile speaker who draws a crowd."

More than 70 per cent of former MLAs prefer to have the dinner in the fall as usual. The rest say either spring or fall is okay with them. It was suggested that the dinner – if in Victoria – be scheduled when the Legislature is sitting. This might encourage more sitting MLAs to attend and make it possible for AFMLABC members to reconnect with former colleagues. Almost 60 per cent want a formal, sit-down dinner as has been the format at Government House. The rest favour a casual, hors d'oeuvre-style format, with a few respondents fine "either way."

A solid majority, 67 per cent, says a high-profile speaker is "a must." Specifically, a few say they'd like to have someone of the stature of former premier Glen Clark as the 2023 dinner guest; he would be a great "draw." One respondent suggested it would be great to feature "a professional entertainer who can parody politicians"... Rex Murphy's name was suggested.

Most survey respondents, almost 80 per cent, are supportive of a no-host bar. Several suggested the association cover the cost of BC wine, beer and cider.

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Esquimalt redresses wanton destruction and looting

Eighty years after looting destroyed Canada's first Japanese garden and tea house in Esquimalt, the township has reimagined, rebuilt and reopened the community landmark to redress an historical injustice.

When Japanese Canadians were uprooted from coastal British Columbia in 1942, members of the public vandalized the tea house that was once a hub of local recreation. One inspector was shocked to find "wanton destruction."

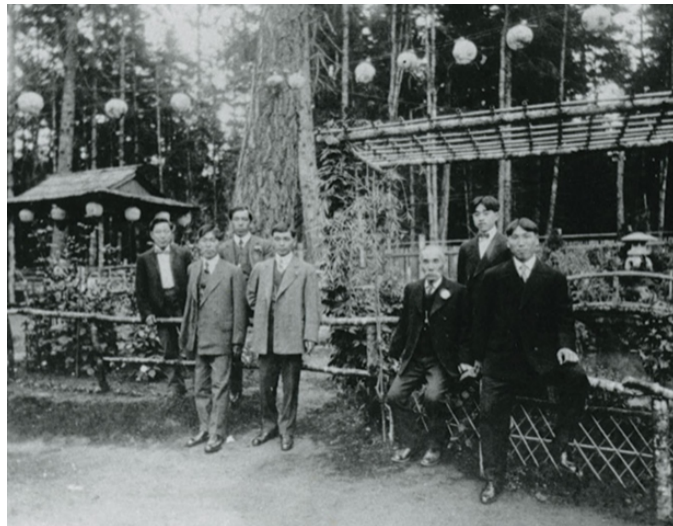
His report detailed the ruin: *"Wisteria trellis . . . demolished/ Three summer houses ... completely demolished/ Open tea room ... railing gone, furniture broken/ House west of tea room ... doors and windows smashed, wiring and light fixtures stolen/ Ball game house ... front torn off, game tables destroyed, all shingles removed from roof/ Gardens – small plants all gone, flowering cherry destroyed."*

The destruction of the tea house was just one instance among thousands in BC's coastal communities. Former neighbours pillaged the houses, farms and businesses of 22,000 Japanese Canadians forced from their homes and into internment by the federal government after Canada declared war on Japan and entered the Pacific theatre of the Second World War.

For three decades, the Japanese tea house and gardens in Gorge Park had been a fixture of Victorian life. In 1907, Hayato Takata and Yoshitaro Kishida opened the gardens designed by Kishida's father, Isaburo, who later developed the Japanese section of Butchart Gardens. At the centre was a tea house with an open dining room and grand views. Throughout the gardens hung hundreds of Japanese lanterns, lighting wisteria trellises and cherry trees. Bamboo bridges crossed streams, and paths wound through a mixed landscape of local and imported plants.

Alongside the tea house were a dancehall and amusements, including the popular "Japanese ball game," where visitors could win prizes imported from Japan. For one Victoria resident, "it was music to my ears to hear my mother say 'we will all go to the Gorge for the day.'"

By 1942, when they were forced to leave, Kishida had long since sold his share of the business to Hayato Takata's brother, Kensuke, and the two Takata families were living at the gardens. This achievement had been hard-won. The province barred them from dozens of fields of employment and forbade them from voting. Their creativity and perseverance allowed them to support their multigenerational family and build a home



A 1907 photo shows Kensuke Takata and Hayato Takata (front row, left and right). Landscape designers Isaburo Kishida, Yushio Kishida and Yoshi Jiro are at right. (Photo: Esquimalt Municipal Archives.)

in British Columbia. (After regaining their freedom following the war, the family would leave their life's work behind, relocating to Toronto.)

This year, Esquimalt is acknowledging its past while building for the future, recognizing the roles of local residents and officials in the destruction of the tea house and working to correct the erasure caused by these acts of uprooting and dispossession. In 2018, the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society began a campaign to convince the township to create a building in the park to honour the Japanese Canadian history there.

University of Victoria researchers joined the initiative. Dillon Takata – Kensuke's great-grandson and the first member of the family to call Victoria home since 1942 – also joined, along with his wife, Lisa. The campaign gained broad public support, convincing many in the region that this history needed to be honoured and told.

The new multi-purpose community pavilion, inspired by Japanese design, opened on June 18th. Inside is a large and prominent entry wall that tells the history. Programming like art and yoga classes will be provided, and the building can be rented for events.

Esquimalt Mayor Barb Desjardins says the city is also working to build relationships with the Esquimalt Nation in hopes of honouring their rich connection with the park.

(Source: Canadian Geographic)