

# Gulf Islands' Island Tides

Giving The Coast A Community Voice For 27 Years



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Rally to end the grizzly bear trophy hunt gathered at the Legislature in Victoria on April 1.

Photo: Jim Hebert

## There's tons of water— isn't there?

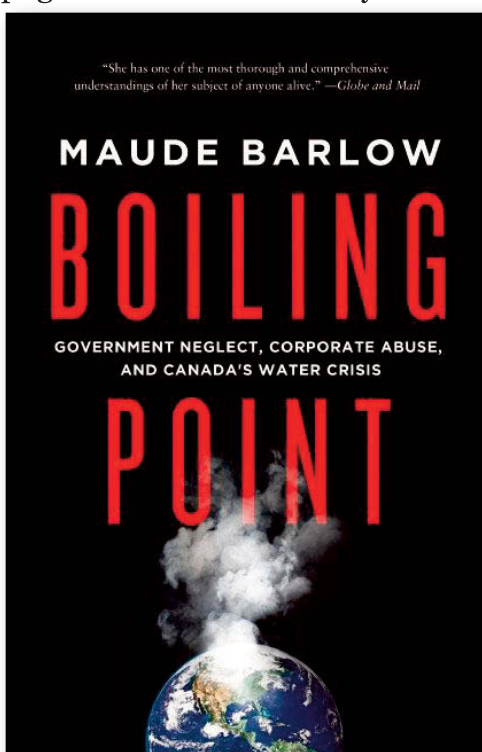
In April, Maude Barlow gave talks in five BC cities on the water crisis and the upcoming provincial election. Courtenay, Nanaimo, Victoria, Williams Lake and Kamloops got to hear the passionate and well-informed Barlow speak.

One of the world's foremost water activists, Maude Barlow has been on the front lines of the planet's water crises for the past 20 years. An expert on the subject, she has worked with governments and organizations around the world to protect this most precious resource.

Last September Barlow's eighteenth book, *Boiling Point: Government Neglect, Corporate Abuse, and Canada's Water Crisis*, was published. Last November, she gave an enlightening and inspiring talk at the Shoal Centre in Sidney.

Barlow says, 'In this book I lay bare the issues facing Canada's water reserves, including long-outdated water laws, unmapped and unprotected groundwater reserves, agricultural pollution, industrial-waste dumping, boil-water

advisories, and the effects of deforestation and climate change. This will be the defining issue of the coming decade, and most of us have no idea that it is on our very own doorstep.'



'My book is a cry from the heart,' she says, 'It is time to abandon our erroneous beliefs that Canada has unlimited supplies of water, that Canadians have taken care of this water heritage or that we still have lots of time to do so.'

'We need a strong, national plan of action based on a new water ethic that puts water protection and water justice at the heart of all our policies and laws. The path forward is clear, if not simple.'

'Water is one of the most important issues of our time and should be front and centre in BC's May 9 election.'

'Pressing water topics include Kinder Morgan's

Trans Mountain pipeline, the Site C dam, Nestlé and other bottled water takings, like in the Elora community, the *Water Sustainability Act*, fracking and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals, mining projects like the Ajax Mine, trade agreements like NAFTA, drinking water advisories in First Nations, and the impacts of gutted federal water legislation on waterways in BC.'

'Maude Barlow is one of our planet's greatest water defenders,' says Naomi Klein, author of *This Changes Everything* and *The Shock Doctrine*. 'This book has all the facts, forceful analysis, and moral clarity that Canadians will need to wake up and join this most urgent of struggles.'

Barlow is the national chairperson of the Council of Canadians and Washington-based Food and Water Watch, a councillor for the World Future Council, a board member for a number of influential organizations and has previously acted as Senior Advisor on Water to the 63rd President of the UN General Assembly. Her work has earned her an impressive 14 honorary doctorates and numerous awards and recognitions.

To read *Boiling Point: Government Neglect, Corporate Abuse, and Canada's Water Crisis*, Maude Barlow, ECW Press, [CLICK HERE](#).



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## Music of the Spheres

Sara de Rose

Over the course of many years, I've created a music theory teaching wheel that teaches scales, chords and composition using simple patterns, allowing music theory to be understood rather than learned by rote.

Several months ago, I came across an image of a 3,000-year-old



Babylonian cuneiform tablet that shows a non-symmetrical 7-pointed star that archaeologists are certain is related to Babylonian music theory. When I saw the star, I recognized it as something that I, myself, had drawn 15-years-ago, in an attempt to understand the origin of the patterns on my music wheel.



So, I wrote a description of where, according to me, the star originates and what it can be used for and sent it to some of the people who study these

things (the International Council of Near Eastern Archaeomusicology: ICONEA, [CLICK HERE](#)).

The director of ICONEA responded, saying that my work provides 'the missing link between linear and circular concepts, and also the link between Mesopotamian and Greek constructions during the Orientalising period (800-600 BC)', and inviting me to present a paper at the University of London, England. With generous fundraising support from my home islands of Lasqueti and Hornby, I accepted the invitation and have recently returned.

My paper shows how the star on the tablet is derived from the study of simple musical ratios and also how it relates to the structure of the major scale. Moreover, my paper shows that the 7-day week is also based on the same pattern: it is for this reason that the 3rd century Roman historian Cassius Dio described the days of the week as being 'in a kind of musical connection with the arrangement of the heavens'.

In fact, the star lies at the heart of the ancient tradition of the music of the spheres, a tradition that gave the numbers of music the highest importance and applied these numbers, metaphorically, to describe the entire cosmos.

I have designed a two-hour workshop in which participants create their own models of the star on the tablet, developing an understanding that sheds light on the following



Photo: Priscilla Ewbank

Shades of winter gold. Odonata Pond as the weather slowly warms up.

questions: What is the origin of the major scale? What is the origin of the week? Why is the octave divided into twelve notes? Why are some notes named using sharps and flats? What is the ancient tradition of the music of the spheres?

The workshop is designed for people who have no previous musical experience, but it is also engaging for the accomplished musician. The workshop is not only stimulating but fun.

For more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

## Lifelong learning

The new idea that people will be continually changing their roles in the world of work, and that therefore, education and training will need a major overhaul, is much talked about these days.

BC Greens have made it a plank in their platform. The strategy includes early childhood education, child care, public education, postsecondary education and adult learning.

Key components of the BC Greens' strategy include:

### • Investing in early childhood education:

- Up to 25 hours free early childhood education per week for three- and four-year-olds;
- Free daycare for working parents with children under three;
- Up to \$500 per month for families with children under three and a stay at home parent.

### • Investing in public education to prepare British Columbians for the emerging economy:

- Increase funding for public schools, beginning in 2017/18 at \$220 million and rising to \$1.46

billion in 2020/21, to allow schools and school districts to invest in every child and prepare students for the emerging economy, and to invest in innovation and technology.

- \$10 million per year for free adult basic education.

- Investing \$35 million in nutrition and physical activity programs to promote learning readiness, and improve student health.

### • Funding for professional development for public school teachers:

- Invest \$140 million over three years to train teachers to deliver the new curriculum.
- Work with indigenous leaders, teachers, universities and colleges to develop policies and strategies to attract highly qualified teachers to the profession, and support recruitment and retention. Special attention will be paid to increasing the number of indigenous teachers.

### • Reviewing the funding model for the K-12 public education system with a view to ensuring equitable access for students:

This will address targeting funding to public

schools with the greatest need and increasing local autonomy regarding funding priorities and distribution.

### • Alleviating the burden of student debt:

- Implement needs-based grants for post-secondary students.
- Offer tax forgiveness of up to \$2,000 a year for up to five years to assist qualifying graduates to repay outstanding debt incurred for tuition fees.
- Set up a task force on post-secondary education funding with a mandate to identify ways to make post-secondary education more relevant, accessible and affordable. The task force will present its report by July 2018.

### • Investing \$65 million over four years to support co-op and work experience programs for high school and undergraduate students.

- Allocating up to \$10 million per year for in-service skills training for workers in small and medium-sized enterprises; and, retraining for those displaced by automation or changing markets.

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Photo: Priscilla Ewbank

Happy Easter! Those Haggis farm eggs come in all sizes—some chickens try harder, says Priscilla.



## Report from the world's largest-ever gathering of Greens! - Elizabeth May, MP

I try to avoid any partisan tinge to my columns in *Island Tides*, but I hope you will forgive me this one time for sharing the inspiring experience of the recent Global Greens Congress in Liverpool, UK.

Not surprisingly, Green members from around the world are keen to avoid excess flights and the GHG emitted to gather from around the world. So the Global Green Congress only takes place every five years. The only one I had previously attended was in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 2007. The 2012 congress in Senegal conflicted with my work in Parliament.

Since that time, I took on the position of co-chair of the Global Greens Parliamentarians Association, so this was an invitation I couldn't refuse.

It was the largest gathering in Green history—2,000 Greens from every continent. Over 100 countries were represented. Our Global Greens Parliamentarians Association benefitted from having more Green national-level MPs all in the same room than we have ever had before. There was a total of just under 400 Green MPs from around the world; though not all of them were able to attend.

We had MP participation from Congo, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Spain, Chad, Colombia, Mexico, New Zealand (with charismatic co-leader, young Maori woman, Metiria Turei), Australia's elected Green Senators, Sweden, Ireland, Finland, Latvia, Iceland, Scotland, France, Belgium, UK and Wales, the lone Green MP Yael Cohen Paran in the Israeli Knesset, and many Green Members of the European Parliament. With my European Green colleagues, we strategized about how to stop CETA. They are the only ones who can.

Our hosts, the Greens of England and Wales, are struggling with the aftermath of Brexit. Still, the only Green MP in Westminster, co-leader Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton-Pavilion, gave a brilliant speech, finding hope 'amid the rubble'.

Greens serving in coalition governments had a harder time getting away, but six Green ministers from the Swedish government participated, including Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin. The Minister of Environment from Luxembourg, Green MP Carole Dieschbourg, presented on our chances of reaching the Paris target of 1.5°C.

But missing were the co-leaders of the Greens of the Netherlands. Fresh from their fantastic election result, in which the alt-right and racist policies of Geert Wilders's Dutch Freedom Party were rejected and the Greens leapt from four seats to fourteen, the Left-Greens of the Netherlands were back at home, negotiating whether they will have a role in a coalition government. (Shades of 'Borgen'—highly recommended Danish drama, if you haven't seen it!)

Dutch Left-Green leader Jesse Klavers, 30-years-old, with a mixed heritage—Moroccan, Indonesian and Dutch—has proclaimed that the Greens are the antidote to right-wing populism. 'What I would say to all my left-wing friends in Europe: don't try to fake the populace,' he said. 'Stand for your principles. Be straight. Be pro-refugee. Be pro-European. We're gaining momentum in the polls. You can stop populism.'

### Fair Voting

The topic of electoral reform was very much on the Liverpool agenda. We had a panel discussion on the state of play in gaining fair voting, with those who lack it—former UK Green leader Natalie Bennett, Jill Stein of the US Greens and me—learning from Metiria Turei how proportional representation has changed the culture of New Zealand politics. I was surprised how many Greens from around the world knew about Justin Trudeau's broken promise for fair voting. They, like so many Canadians, were angry and disappointed.

In that light, the results in the Netherlands are worth sharing widely in Canada. Trudeau has

wrongly claimed that proportional representation will allow extremist parties to gain power. But the opposite is true. Without the pressure created by First Past the Post—to unite the Right—extremist parties like Wilders are kept out of power. If Canada had had proportional representation, the Alliance Party and the Progressive Conservative Party could have co-existed. The hostile take-over of the PC Party by Alliance essentially moved our whole political spectrum to the right. And with the perversity of FPTP and false majority rule, Stephen Harper, who never had the support of more than 24% of Canadians, ruled with a majority. (24% being the actual population represented by the Conservatives' 39% popular vote in 2011 with only 60% of Canadians voting.).

In contrast, the Dutch election had a turn-out of 81.9%. Even if Wilders' party had come in first, it would have had no chance of gaining more than 35 seats—40 short of being able to form government. And none of the other parties in the Netherlands were willing to touch his brand of alt-right populism. It is a shame that, coming in fourth, Wilders won 19 seats, but with Greens in fifth place having 14 seats and mainstream and left parties carrying the majority, it is a sure thing that the new coalition will stand firm against his anti-immigration 'Dutch-first' policies.


The themes of global solidarity for a compassionate agenda, respecting human rights, moving aggressively to phase-out fossil fuels, ending poverty, eliminating all nuclear weapons, and empowering real grassroots democracy were shared themes of the Global Greens. We are a global movement.

Caroline Lucas spoke for us all 'We stand against everything the Trump agenda stands for....' And former Australian Green leader, Christine Milne, 'The future will be Green, or it will not be at all.' 🌱



# Island Tides

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VoteMate Might Help

Dear Editor:

I'm a high school student in Coquitlam with a passion for politics and programming, and I'm working on a project for this election called VoteMate.org. It's a free app and website that collects information about the election in one, easy-to-use place. This includes candidate bios, pictures, and contact info, policies and issues for candidates and parties, and events, such as all-candidates-meetings, held in each riding. We also have a feature so that any voter can ask questions of any and all candidates in their riding.

I believe that a project like VoteMate will help voters make an informed choice at the ballot box, a crucial element in our democracy. Citizens often don't have the time to research the different options, and don't vote because of this.

VoteMate streamlines the process as much as possible, putting all the information in one place. I think this is something that is relevant to readers of *Island Tides*, and I want to spread it to voters across the province. I invite you try out the app at [www.votemate.org](http://www.votemate.org).

Laef Kucheran, Coquitlam

No Better Than Our Enemies

Dear Editor:

Horrific, barbaric, a senseless act of terrorism; these are but a sampling of the words being used to describe the killings in London on March 22.

Yet, as truthful as they may be, they raise a troubling question: how do we describe the deaths of more than one million Iraqis in a war now commonly acknowledged to have been based on a deliberate lie? Killing is no less awful simply because it has been sanctioned by our state; fear and terror no less odious when they are generated to advance our corporate interests.

The wars we launch for geopolitical advantage are as horrifying, barbaric, incomprehensible and terrifying to the people who suffer them as was the dreadful attack which shook Westminster.

Only by utterly rejecting a calculus which judges the lives of others to be of lesser value than our own; only by recognizing that our appetite for human rights, for freedom and peace and prosperity, is mirrored in the lives of people in every nation, can there be any real hope of peace on earth.

Sadly, we are no better than our enemies, and to change the world, we must first change ourselves.

Mike Ward, Duncan

Readers' Letters

Looking Out On Tankers?

Dear Editor:

I live on Salt Spring Island, and spend some of my most cherished moments here hiking up Mount Erskine, in the centre of the island. Once at the summit, I look out in awe and wonder at the expansive beauty of the Salish Sea, the Gulf Islands, and Vancouver Island and feel grateful for the refuge of this place.

However, in recent weeks, my trips to the summit have been filling me with despair and anxiety for what might happen to the animals and plants of the Salish Sea if the Kinder Morgan pipeline gets built, and the increase in supertankers results in an oil spill.

As I prepare to vote in the coming election in BC, I am looking for the candidate who will be a champion for the coast in the Legislature, someone who is committed to protecting the coast from the Kinder Morgan pipeline. This is of the highest priority to me, as I believe it should be for all of us living in BC.

Heeding the powerful words of First Nations leaders ([CoastProtectors.ca](http://CoastProtectors.ca)), I am convinced this is the most important choice for all of us in BC. We all must vote for the coast.

Ahava Shira, Salt Spring Island

Tankers Are An Election Issue

Dear Editor:

As we enter into the new election, citizens on the southern coast are concerned about escalating tanker traffic, and facing further safety risks in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) tankers.

Aside from issues of wave and sound disruption and leaked fuel, LNG tankers are unregulated in Canadian waters. Tanker accidents, while rare, would be catastrophic. The Steelhead LNG proposal in the Saanich Inlet includes tankers travelling through WASANÉC territory, past dense communities and the Victoria Airport, and across BC's busiest ferry routes.

Citizen-led groups are launching an interactive website ([CLICK HERE](#)) that offers comprehensive LNG tanker safety and security information, a map to spot where homes and critical neighbourhood infrastructure falls within tanker hazard zones, and a campaign urging BC and federal governments to put a pause on LNG tankers until adequate regulations are in place.

Hilary Strang, Saanich Inlet Network

Exciting Government

Dear Editor:

Your editorial of March 16 indicated you were looking for an exciting government, one that could offer British Columbians new, innovative, important proposals. Me too. One with outstanding candidates. Me too. Fortunately, I don't have to look all that far. My MLA, Gary Holman, has had an outstanding career in public service, both as Salt Spring's Regional Director and as Saanich North and the Island's NDP MLA. I can't wait to see what he'll accomplish as a member of government.

And for innovative proposals, I don't have to look any further than the NDP's platform.

Changing our first past the post voting system? As it happens, Gary is the official opposition spokesperson for democratic reform. He's been visiting communities across BC, talking to citizens about just that. If elected, the NDP will give British Columbians a vote on election reform so we can decide if we want a proportional representation system in place for the 2021 provincial election. The New Democrats would campaign in favour of the change that is put before the people.

Social services and economic fairness? The NDP would bring in \$10 a day childcare, phase in a \$15 an hour minimum wage, and implement a poverty reduction plan with legislated objectives and timelines.

The environment? The NDP has pledged to do all in their power to stop Site C and Kinder Morgan and fix BC's broken environmental review process.

Climate action? The NDP will increase the carbon tax, make it fair through income-based rebates, and invest the net revenue directly into greenhouse gas reduction programs like public transit, energy conservation, and smaller-scale renewable energy sources.

There's more, much more, but I'm seventy-one years old and that's about all the excitement I can take in a single dose.

Murray Reiss, Salt Spring Island

**Prosperity Mine**

*The following letter was sent to Premier Christy Clark, Environment Minister Mary Polak and Associate Deputy Minister Kevin Jardine.*

Dear Premier Clark, Minister Polak and Associate Deputy Minister Jardine:

We are writing with respect to Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) Resolution 2016-49, 'Support for the Tsilhqot'in Nation and Condemning the Provincial Amendment Process for the 'Prosperity Mine', which was presented, affirmed and endorsed by consensus at the UBCIC Annual General Assembly on September 23, 2016.

On November 16, 2010, the federal government rejected the Prosperity Mine. On February 26, 2014, the federal government rejected the New Prosperity Mine.

In contrast, on January 14, 2010, before the first federal panel had even started its public hearings, British Columbia approved the Prosperity Mine, on the basis of a report from the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) that dismissed the impacts of the mine on the Tsilhqot'in people as insignificant.

The Tsilhqot'in Nation and its communities endured two separate federal environmental assessment processes for the Prosperity and New Prosperity Mine proposals. In each review, an independent federal panel emphasized the profound cultural and spiritual importance of Teztan Biny and Nabas to the Tsilhqot'in people, as a gathering place, as a cultural school for youth, as a place of spiritual power and healing, as sacred burial and cremation grounds, and as critical hunting, trapping and gathering areas. The federal panel for New Prosperity Mine warned that the mine would 'endanger [the Tsilhqot'in Nation's] ability to sustain their way of life and cultural identity'.

The EAO has rejected the Tsilhqot'in Nation's position that it is egregious and absurd to both consider further provincial approvals at this time and to subject the Tsilhqot'in people to yet another approval process. The EAO has said it has no choice but to consider Taskeo Mines Limited's (TML) application after a letter from TML to the Premier demanding the amendment, and threatening the Province with litigation.

The federal panel for Prosperity Mine expressly noted that the EAO had reached its decision without the benefit of the substantial information it received directly from First Nations members in community hearings, and without the submissions of federal departments, which raised serious concerns with the project.

For the Province to advance an amendment process for the Prosperity Mine despite the findings of the federal environmental assessment process and the profound impact such a project would have on the Tsilhqot'in Nation, is in direct contravention of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states:

Article 26 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

Article 27: States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the right of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in the process.

Article 29: Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources;

Article 32:

(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories

READERS' LETTERS, please scroll to next page





Taylor's checkerspot



Bremner's fritillary

Now that the weather is starting to warm, it's time to start enjoying butterflies—some of the most beautiful, charismatic, and fascinating creatures in the world. Although they have been present all winter hibernating as eggs, larvae, pupae, or adults, they don't emerge from their dormant stage until they are enticed by the warmth and the growth of their essential food plants. When the conditions are right they develop into mature adults and take flight like flowers on wings searching for mates to continue their cycle of life. Depending on the species some adults live and fly for only a week or two while others can live for several months.

'Salt Spring is the home of the last remaining population of Bremner's Fritillary in Canada, and Denman is home to the last remaining population of Taylor's Checkerspots in Canada.'

Butterflies survive best in natural habitats, and it's not surprising that both Denman and Salt Spring Islands are great locations for butterflies. Both have large tracts of suitable protected conservation areas and both have concerned conservancies active in protecting and improving butterfly habitat, educating the public, and working with landowners to establish covenants for sensitive ecosystems. Coincidentally, each island is also host to its own beautiful, charismatic, and endangered butterfly. Salt Spring is the home of the last remaining population of Bremner's fritillary in

Canada, and Denman is home to the last remaining population of Taylor's checkerspots in Canada. Seventy butterfly species have been recorded on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, but they have suffered from habitat destruction by human activities and developments, pesticide and herbicide spraying, and the spread of invasive plants. Some species haven't been seen for many years, many have been locally extirpated, many are in serious decline, and several are provincially endangered. However, there are still many species to enjoy and with a little effort, thirty to forty species can easily be found over the spring and summer. *Vancouver Island Butterflies* by Yip and Miskelly is available in most libraries and bookstores.

## Pender excels at Victoria schools Regional Science Fair

Following a day-long science fair in a crowded Pender School gym on March 8, a number of projects went on to participate in the regional event in Victoria on April 10. It was a great day for Pender students, as 12 students won 13 different awards, the most awarded public school participating. The Pender cheering section at the award ceremony also received special recognition as our people enthusiastically cheered each other on in the best spirit of our community, including Pender event judges Carol and Jackie who came over for the event. Pender organizer and teacher Steve Dunsmuir said that feedback from the event local judges' and the community at the Pender event were an important step to success. Those projects that were given high scores by Pender judges also received the highest evaluations at the regionals. This was the second year for the Pender Science Fair and it is going from strength to strength; there



Lauren Ohnona's Grade 7 project

is talk of expanding it to a curriculum fair.

### Readers' Letters cont.

and other resources. (2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative insertions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources. The UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support the efforts of the Tsilhqot'in Nation to protect their lands of profound cultural and spiritual value from the proposed New Prosperity Mine, and will stand behind the Tsilhqot'in Nation in defense of these lands regardless of any amendment process or decision by the Environmental Assessment Office

(EAO) or British Columbia. The UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly condemn the EAO's decision to consider an amendment that would approve New Prosperity, in the face of the federal government's firm rejection of this proposal, and under the cloud of political pressure and threats of litigation from TML against the Province. The UBCIC advises the EAO and British Columbia that First Nations across the province are bearing witness to the New Prosperity amendment process and are alarmed and deeply concerned by the EAO's apparent lack of integrity, and its disregard for the interests of First Nations in this province. On behalf of the Union Of Bc Indian Chiefs, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip

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**MEETING**  
School District #64 (Gulf Islands). Regular meetings of the Board of School Trustees will be held on Wednesday, April 12, at the Pender Islands School. Meeting commencing at 1pm. Public Welcome!  
Agenda: <http://sd64.bc.ca/district/school-board-meetings/>

**Moon Dates:**  
New: April 26  
Full: May 10



BC ELECTION

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BC ELECTION

VICTORIA—SWAN LAKE

**Chris Maxwell, BC Greens**

As role models, I was lucky to have Anne Pask-Wilkinson (my great-aunt, a Raging Granny) and Merve Wilkinson (my great-uncle, a sustainable forester in Nanaimo and recipient of the Orders of BC and Canada for his lifelong forestry work). In their 70s, Anne and Merve were arrested protesting the clear-cutting of Clayoquot Sound. The judge observed they were ‘magnificently unrepentant’. Merve was also the embodiment of the BC Green’s vision for the management and utilization of BC’s natural resources. A BC Green government will build a resource economy that is strong today and sustainable for tomorrow.

While aquaculture often falls under federal jurisdiction, a BC Green government will use licensing authority to prevent damage to wild fish stocks and incentivize land-based aquaculture. In forestry, we will prioritize maximal returns for our natural assets and enact protections that ensure our resource utilization industries are successful, safe, sustainable and environmentally sound.

NANAIMO

**Kathleen Harris, BC Greens**

Depleted industry regulations have allowed multi-fold damage in BC’s forests and oceans. Aquaculture must be regulated to ensure native species have clean oceans for survival and safe consumption. Land-based salmon farms are a better option than spreading disease to wild species.

Oil/bitumen spills are poisonous with devastating, multiple levels of harm. No regulation can ensure pipeline and bitumen tanker spills do not happen. Since it is impossible to guarantee safe transportation of these products, expansion cannot happen.

Careless logging practices need stronger industry regulations that ensure protection of water resources, wildlife, and sustainable jobs. Old-growth trees are more valuable living than as lumber. Forestry deregulation is removing all measurable and enforceable environmental standards and the requirement for licencees to operate wood processing mills. Controls need to mandate raw logs to manufacturers in BC for processing into finished products, reversing the sell-out of this lucrative sector to foreign companies.

MID ISLAND—PACIFIC RIM

**Scott Fraser, BC NDP**

John Horgan and the BC NDP would ensure that aquaculture tenures are sited appropriately and in accordance with the Cohen Commission recommendations, and do not negatively impact the marine environment. We would also ensure that competing uses (Raven Coal Mine proposal) do not put the marine environment at risk from heavy metals which could negatively impact the sale and marketing of products.

Regarding forestry, we would maximize the value (jobs) from trees harvested—BC has the worst ratio of jobs per cubic metre. A BC NDP government would reduce raw log export and maximize investment/encouragement of innovation and value-added to ensure that BC workers and communities benefit—not just multinational corporations. We would ensure that forest practices are sustainable and do not put sensitive ecosystems and watersheds at risk, and that companies respect their obligations to

Island Tides asks:

**‘How would you regulate the aquaculture industry? The logging and wood products industry?’**

maintain public access to backcountry.

NORTH ISLAND

**Sue Moen, BC Greens**

A land-based aquaculture industry could be a strong and thriving industry in BC with well-paying, local jobs. We will protect our wild salmon by removing pens from migratory routes and put a moratorium on new licences. The precautionary principle must be applied to this industry to ensure the health of our wild salmon and our marine eco-systems. We will incentivize the transfer to land to preserve the current jobs.

We believe in sustainable, healthy forests that work for everyone. I will work to reform the Forest Management Tenure System to allow more local control of this resource. We will include forest health, planting, sustainable harvesting, eco-system repair through to local processing and value added in our action plan. This will create significant and well-paying local jobs in our coastal and First Nations communities. We will end old-growth logging on Vancouver Island.

PARKSVILLE—QUALICUM

**Glenn Sollitt, BC Greens**

I support the initiative to create a federal Aquaculture Act so that regulations are consolidated, clear and put the health of wild salmon as the primary concern.

The 2015 Senate report recommends doubling of the industry, however, current research is spotty and disjointed so no expansion should occur until government-accepted data verifies the safety of our ecosystems and social licence endorses the industry.

With regards to forestry legislation, it is imperative that we cease the logging of coastal old-growth forests and focus on increasing the value of the remaining timber that is harvested.

BC employs fewer jobs per cubic metre of wood than many other western countries and less than our own past delivered. Automation pushes job creation down, however, minimally processed logs hurt our industry and province. The BC government needs to incentivify value add into forestry industry.

NANAIMO-NORTH COWICHAN

**Lia Versaevel, BC Greens**

Regulation of the aquaculture industry is the responsibility of the federal government through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, but BC could do much more to open up lines of communication and increase oversight. The province can and should oversee transport and processing, and prevent oil spills and pollution on our coast. BC should also encourage academic research into salmon farming, so that the best evidence-based practices can be used in this vital industry.

Forestry will continue to support local economies for centuries if managed properly. This renewable resource can be managed more effectively and efficiently by limiting old-growth logging, and by regulating thinning of second-growth forests and the impacts of transportation of heavy loads on our roads and highways. Raw log exports should be banned and the emphasis put on developing an integrated wood processing industry to provide lumber for affordable housing construction, furniture, and other value-added products.

COWICHAN VALLEY

**Sonia Furstenuau, BC Greens**

Poor regulation of industry in BC has become one of the most significant threats to our environment. We need to ensure that we are not allowing permanent damage to ecosystems while government turns a blind eye. Professional reliance has created a ‘foxes guarding the hens’ situation in BC.

BC Greens have been clear: open pen fish farms are harming wild pacific salmon and the province can use its licensing authority to stop them. The safer approach to aquaculture is land-based, which prevents the spread of pathogens to wild salmon—Greens would incentivize this shift.

The logging industry needs to be geared towards long-term sustainable jobs and forests—Greens would ensure that our forestry industry would include value-added manufacturing, creating more jobs in BC. Greens would also ensure protection of the last old-growth forests on Vancouver Island.

SAANICH NORTH & THE ISLANDS

**Adam Olsen, BC Greens**

I think it’s important to highlight that there’s cause for concern with respect to the approach this government has taken to resource industry regulation in general. Their massive cuts to ministries and irresponsible hands-off approach, based on their professional reliance model, has created a lack of oversight and led to a ton of issues in many industries including the aquaculture and forestry sectors.

We believe there is a responsibility for the province to regulate aquaculture through licensing in a way that ensures wild salmon stocks are not negatively affected. While a Green government would ensure this, we would also incentivize land-based aquaculture as there are far fewer harmful environmental consequences.

On forestry, we would ensure that we prioritize value-added manufacturing so that the long-term benefits flow back to British Columbians. We are also the only party that will ban the logging of remaining old growth on Vancouver Island.

MID ISLAND—PACIFIC RIM

**Alicia La Rue, BC Greens**

It is important that we elect officials that have our future needs in mind, as we make decisions for today. Our agriculture industry has not met its challenge in problem solving pathogens in farmed fish. The long-term impact is at the cost of our wild salmon population. Most of the regulations of the aquaculture industry are under federal jurisdiction, but the Province has the licensing authority. BC Green Party would put a stop to open-water fish farms. It is our goal to create ingenuity of engineers in creating a sustainable fish farming industry that meets the needs of consumers, but also has no negative impact on natural ecosystems. Watching raw long exports being shipped off is like watching the potential for jobs in both the milling and the manufacturing. We need to bring value back to our resources, so they can provide for today but also be part of our growth in the future.

SAANICH SOUTH:

**Mark Neufeld, BC Greens**

The BC Greens would incentivize land-based aquaculture. Our priority is the protection of BC’s legendary wild salmon population; unless the

Continued on next page



Island Tides asks:

“How would you regulate the aquaculture industry? The logging and wood products industry?”

Continued from previous page

open-pen fish farms can begin to prove there is no negative impact, we will not grant them licences. Although much of the regulation of aquaculture is federal, we grant licences provincially.

As already noted in our climate platform, we will invest in the management of forestry carbon sinks. We will take action to maximize value added manufacturing from each piece of wood. We need to invest in BC jobs and this happens best when BC gets to decide what happens to our wood from forest to final product. The opportunity for innovation and small and medium size enterprises is remarkable. The argument has been made so powerfully by the Ancient Forest Alliance and others, that our old-growth trees are worth far more standing for generations to come.

NORTH ISLAND

Claire Trevena, BC NDP

Aquaculture has existed on the BC coast for many years and it creates jobs, particularly in processing. To protect the marine environment, the BC NDP would incentivize a transition to closed containment farming. Most of the regulatory jurisdiction around aquaculture is federal, although BC has responsibility for lease renewal and therefore the siting of farms. The regulations around that have to be tightened and we will work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to act on the recommendations of the Cohen Commission.

Our forest industry is generational and should be one of the truly sustainable sectors of our economy. That will only happen if we stop the race to the bottom. We have to restrict raw log exports and assist in the development of secondary industries to use the logs harvested. We also have to invest in forest health, from silviculture to land management, which has been neglected for years.

COWICHAN VALLEY

Lori Iannidinardo, BC NDP

Our viable wild salmon fishery on Vancouver Island needs protection. John Horgan and the BC NDP respect the 2012 Cohen Commission’s 75 recommendations for protecting wild salmon, including revising farm-siting criteria to prohibit net-pen aquaculture on salmon migration routes, ensuring First Nations consultation, and freezing farm expansion until 2020, all of which the BC Liberals have ignored. We’ll continue to work with the federal government to implement the research and regulations Cohen recommended.

In the forestry sector we’re committed to ensuring sustainable and safe logging practices, while revitalizing lumber mills and wood-product manufacturing to restore lost forestry jobs and make sure the only raw logs leaving BC are those we can’t turn into lumber or value-added products. The BC NDP will also ensure the sector is replanting diverse, climate-resilient forests, something that Christy

Clark’s Liberals have neglected.

NANAIMO-NORTH COWICHAN

Doug Routley, BC NDP

Aquaculture is a complex industry in BC combining shellfish and finfish aquaculture. In 2009 the BC Supreme Court ruled the federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over the management of aquaculture, so this limits what an NDP government can do. BC still controls tenuring (of land) as well as property and civil rights regarding fisheries, which includes processing, labour relations and the sale or disposition of fish once caught, so we can look at improvements in those areas of the industry.

We are excited about the possibilities for BC’s forest industry. A John Horgan government will create jobs by ensuring more of the logs harvested in BC are processed here. We will create and protect jobs by fighting hard for a fair softwood deal and by increasing investment in reforestation. And finally we will reduce carbon pollution by increasing the use of wood during construction in BC and around the world.

PARKSVILLE-QUALICUM

Sue Powell, BC NDP

The health of wild salmon populations is a critical factor in the economic, social and cultural well-being of our coast and our province as a whole. I support the findings of the Cohen Commission and am disappointed that the Christy Clark government has not worked with the federal government on implementing those recommendations.

The BC Liberals have killed 30,000 direct forestry jobs and many more indirect jobs. They continue to allow the exportation of raw logs at a massive rate while BC mills struggle to find enough wood to create jobs in BC. As a proud member of John Horgan’s team, I am committed to a plan that provides incentives to builders using engineered wood products; that works with industry, local governments and First Nations to expand wood manufacturing; and that maximizes the use of innovative BC wood products in infrastructure projects like schools, hospitals and affordable housing construction.

COURTENAY-COMOX

Ronna-Rae Leonard, BC NDP

For years, communities throughout Vancouver Island have been calling for better watershed protection over their drinking water sources. The Christy Clark Liberals have removed nearly all the ‘boots on the ground’, with major cuts to forestry staff working in enforcement—once again pandering to her corporate donors, rather than taking care of British Columbia and British Columbians. She would prefer to create conflict, rather than make sure our working forests provide jobs at the same time as protecting our water supplies.

Rather than seeing the rapid de-nuding of our watersheds for export of raw logs, I am proud the

BC NDP will focus on innovation in collaboration with post-secondary institutions and industry, to develop manufactured wood products, and create markets at home and for export. After Christy Clark has undermined the future of the forestry industry, we will expand investment in reforestation. BC deserves our commitment to sustainable forestry.

SAANICH NORTH & THE ISLANDS

Gary Holman, BC NDP

BC does not regulate the aquaculture industry but controls where projects are sited. The BC NDP will implement the Cohen Commission recommendations to ensure that salmon farms are not located or operating near salmon migration routes. We also have a long-standing commitment to support transition of the industry to closed containment technology.

The BC NDP will ensure that logs needed by local mills are not exported and will provide incentives for local processing and value-added manufacturing such as engineered wood products. We will aggressively re-invest in tree planting, on-the-ground monitoring and enforcement of timber harvesting regulations, particularly for environmental treasures such as old-growth, streams and wetlands.

As a result of talking with groups such as the BC Wildlife Federation, we have proposed legislation that would protect and establish enforceable management objectives for species-at-risk and biodiversity in our forests. We will ban grizzly bear trophy hunting in BC.

LANGFORD-JUAN DE FUCA

Brendan Ralfs, BC Greens

The Greens will set the annual allowable timber harvest at sustainable levels; invest in sustainable management of forestry sink; take action to maximize value-added manufacturing of BC lumber; and, support the management, harvesting and processing of resources in a way that achieves maximum long-term benefits to British Columbians.

In addition, the BCGP won’t allow logging to continue in remaining old-growth forest stands on Vancouver Island.

The Greens will also ensure that sockeye salmon migration is not affected by aquaculture; take action to protect and prevent damage to our wild salmon stocks from aquaculture practices; review licences for aquaculture industrial sites that are on sockeye salmon migration routes; grant licences to industry stakeholders only if they can prove that there will be no negative impacts to wild fish; and, incentivize land-based aquaculture to become a thriving industry in BC.

In these, as in all industries, the BC Greens are committed to ensuring adequate regulation and enforcement of environmental compliance to ensure sustainability for future generations.

Island Tides emailed the above question to all contactable, declared candidates running in: Powell–River Sunshine Coast, North Island, Courtenay–Comox, Parksville–Qualicum, Mid Island-Pacific Rim, Nanaimo, Nanaimo–North Cowichan, Cowichan Valley, Langford–Juan de Fuca, Saanich North & The Islands, Oak Bay–Gordon Head, Esquimalt–Metchosin, Saanich South, Victoria–Beacon Hill, Victoria–Swan Lake.

All received responses of the correct length are above, and may have been edited for relevance to the question. All candidates are invited to answer upcoming questions.

Jim Benninger, David Calder, Alana DeLong, Barb Desjardins, Kim Darwin, Alex Dutton, Rob Fleming, Scott Fraser, Sonia Furstenau, Paris Gaudet, Kalen Harris, Kathleen Harris, Gary Holman, John Horgan, Steve Housser, Lori Iannidinardo, Croale James, Leonard Krog, Alicia La Rue, Chris Maxwell, Andy MacKinnon, Mark Neufeld, Sue Moen, Cathy Noel, Adam Olsen, Lana Popham, Sue Powell, Stephen Roberts, Doug Routley, Ernie Sellentin, Nic Simons, Dallas Smith, Glenn Sollitt, Michelle Stilwell, Claire Trevena, Lia Versaavel, Andrew Weaver, Matthew Wilson



## AROUND THE ISLANDS

### Heritage Farm Day

May's Ruckle Heritage Farm Day on south Salt Spring has proven to bring out a large crowd to experience the beauty of Ruckle Park, made particularly unique and special with the oldest operating family farm in BC tucked right into the middle. The 2016 event was cancelled so it is high time to visit the farm.

Educational booths are located in the Heritage Farm area demonstrating crafts such as spinning, weaving, basket-making, and quilting. The blacksmithing group is alongside the old forge building, and ice cream and butter are being churned fresh at the Milk House with the Brown Swiss cow nearby.

Folks can walk all over the grounds and take a peek into the past at the white heritage house. The 4-H Club displays information and animals, as well as selling baked goods. The Lions Club are making BBQ'd burgers and hotdogs while the kids are getting their faces painted or trying their hand at log sawing, nail hammering, the fish pond, or the tug-of-war! Local musicians entertain.

Alongside the old heritage barn are displays of farm products, from wool and hide, antique tools, and quilters busy on a project. Inside the barn, view old farm equipment and a film, 'The Making of Ruckle Park', featuring interviews with Lotus Ruckle and other local farmers.

The farm manager will run his border collies through their sheep herding paces. Also on hand are the farm's turkeys and bottle-fed lambs.

Anyone wishing to volunteer may contact Marjorie Lane at 250-653-4071 or [ruckleafarm@shaw.ca](mailto:ruckleafarm@shaw.ca).

### Books, Prizes & Awards

Mother Tongue Publishing Ltd has been short-listed for the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize (BC Book Prizes) for Joan Haggerty's *The Dancehall Years*, set on Bowen Island just before Pearl Harbour. The winner will be announced April 29. Salt Spring's Mother Tongue is the smallest publisher to be nominated.

Each year, Mother Tongue principle, Mona Fertig, embarks on a quest for the great BC Novel through a contest, see next page. Some notable writers have begun their careers through the contest. For her services to literature, Vancouver Library made Fertig a 'Literary Landmark' with a plaque at 131 Water Street.

On April 15, to celebrate National Poetry Month, Fertig and Penn Kemp, Inaugural Poet Laureate of London, Ontario, will be reading at Salt Spring Public Library at 3pm.

### Commuter Tax Credit

In the House of Commons on April 3, in response to the cancellation of the

public transit rebate, Nanaimo-Ladysmith MP Sheila Malcolmson demanded that the government restore an important rebate which makes life more affordable for ferry commuters.

She said, 'The Liberal budget removed an important transit rebate. In my riding of Nanaimo-Ladysmith, coastal ferry users were greatly aided by this tax credit. Given BCLiberals hiked coastal ferry fares at over 10 times the rate of inflation, the federal rebate cut the cost of daily ferry travel, and helped make ends meet. For a government who talks a lot about how it supports the middle class, this move doesn't make any sense. Will the Liberals reconsider, and restore this important rebate?'

The government waived an answer with a general statement about making life affordable. [CLICK HERE](#)

### Pull Together Fundraiser

A Pull Together fundraiser is being hosted at the ArtSpring theatre on Good Friday. Baba Brinkman's *Rap Guide to Climate Change* will raise money to finance First Nations legal campaigns against the Kinder Morgan Pipeline project. The event will include refreshments and a silent auction with art items and services.

Brinkman is the world's only 'peer reviewed science rap artist'. Through poignant visuals, rap, music and spoken-word poetry, Brinkman leads a smart, funny and compelling mashup of climate change research, pop culture, and call-to-arms.

Brinkman has wowed crowds from New York City to Edinburgh and his performance at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference was widely acknowledged as a milestone in science communications. His shows appeal to a wide spectrum of audiences and have been described as 'raucous rap entertainment, for those who may not like rap'.

To learn more about Pull Together, [CLICK HERE](#). For information on Baba Brinkman's work, [CLICK HERE](#).

### Summer Schedules Kick-in

BC Ferries switched to their summer schedule on April 1. Salt Spring's transit system will switch to their summer schedule at the beginning of May with an addition of five bus trips between Ganges and Fulford Harbour on Saturdays.

### BC's Grizzly Bear Bars

The grizzly bear trophy hunt season has opened. Several campaigns are being launched to 'save BC's grizzly bears'. Raincoast Conservation Foundation and Denman Island Chocolate launched a 'Grizzly Bar' to raise funds to help protect these animals. Proceeds go directly to efforts by Raincoast and the Coastal First Nation's Bear Working Group to stop trophy hunting.

Oh dear. I better put a notice up a the General Store. No! At The Snug. Maybe both. I'll post on the forum. And an ad in The Undercurrent. Or I'll turn it in to the RCMP. Wait! Here's an address. I'll take it over, maybe with a small gift.



Upon finding a wallet in Crippen Park

RON WOODALL

Chocolate buyers will also have the chance to win a trip aboard Raincoast's research vessel, the *Achiever*, to look for and study grizzly bears along BC's coast. To learn more, [CLICK HERE](#).

### New SD №69 Scholarship

Together with the Pieter de Reuver Foundation, Qualicum's school district has created of a new scholarship for graduating high school students who will be going directly to an accredited Canadian post-secondary institution. The fund will grant one student per year \$5,000 to put towards a post-secondary education.

The fund is for those who contribute to the culture and fabric of school through 'active participation in arts, athletics, leardership, or services' and who demonstrate excellence as a learner and a commitment to community service and volunteer work.

Applications closed this year on April 7. The winner will be announced and presented with their award in June.

### CRD Arts Development Grant

Grants totalling \$102,500 will be given by the CRD Arts Commission to twenty-five organizations in the Capital Regional District this year.

The Project Grants will go towards groups that support the production of a wide range of events in theatre,

music, visual and literary arts, as well as festivals in film, music, dance, visual arts and the arts of diverse cultures. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

### Water Treatment Funds

Money will be going towards water and wastewater treatment facilities in the Sea to Sky Corridor. The BC and federal governments are collaborating to provide four new projects with funds through the Government of Canada's Clean Water and Waste Water Fund.

The Lions Bay Water Storage Facilities, Squamish Water System Improvements, The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District's Pinecrest Estates Wastewater Treatment Plant (Sewer) Replacement project, and Whistler's Emerald Water System Disinfection Upgrade will be funded. The projects will receive a total of more than \$4.2 million in federal funding and \$2.8 million in provincial funding. The money will go towards upgrading, replacing and improving facilities.

Bowen Island is also receiving money for its Cove Bay Water Treatment Plant. The BC and Canadian governments will be providing Bowen Island with a joint sum of over \$5.8 million—over \$1.9 million from the federal government and \$3.8 million from the province. This money is being provided through the Small Communities Fund. ✍



# Struggling Carbon Buster Encounters Dying Coral Reef

Reef - Peter Nix

Damn! Even on vacation, I can't escape my ongoing—and imperfect—struggle as a carbon buster.

After working in Greek refugee camps—a crisis fueled in part by climate change droughts in Syria—I had to leave and wait for a new Greek visa. Partly to avoid the high carbon emissions caused by flying back and forth from Canada, I decided to go snorkeling in the South China Sea.

Looking at promotional posters' images, I wanted to swirl in ocean swells among garden-like towers of coral, accompanied by personable and colourful fish. And so, expectantly, I gaze downwards onto the ocean floor, anticipating beauty. But reality intrudes.

Instead of magnificent coral towers, I see decaying coral pillars. White skeletons stagger on the ocean floor like bankrupt corporate buildings, bleached bits of coral peeling from once brilliant biological structures.

The destruction of coral reefs worldwide has



routinely rationalizes contradictory behaviours—so we can feel good about ourselves. In this case, it justifies the act of flying to coral reefs even though carbon emissions from airplanes are destroying those same reefs.

That bundle of rationalizing brain neurons might say 'No need to do anything about coral reefs or climate change, someone else will do it.'

But another bundle of neurons, more thoughtful, could ask: 'Really, how are refugees living in miserable camps in Greece doing with that do-nothing plan?' or maybe 'How will children play when it's 50°C outside?'

A famous writer, Walt Kelly, said regarding the need to take meaningful

action about our environment 'we have met the enemy, and it is us'.

A recent academic study concluded that it takes only 3.5% of a population to create social change. After all, fossil fuel companies can sell oil only if 'we' buy gas; politicians stop oil pipelines only if 'we' protest.

And since about 70% of produced oil is used for transportation, lowering your travelling carbon footprint would make you an agent of change.

I was once an environmental consultant to tar sands companies—Canada's biggest oil producers and greenhouse gas emitters. But eventually, neurons in the logical, non rationalizing, part of my brain said 'You are supporting the unsustainable.' So I quit.

To lower my carbon footprint, I rarely fly because airplanes are huge carbon gas emitters. Whenever possible, I use less polluting buses or trains. And to compensate for any travel carbon emissions, I buy carbon credits to decrease wood burning in Africa—yes, wood is a carbon fuel.

Are carbon credits a rationalization for doing what I want to do anyway? You decide. But for sure, two choices now confront every thoughtful traveller: pollute more, or pollute less?



been in the news. But do people understand that the death of a major ecosystem predicts our own human future if we fail to quickly lower our carbon emissions?

So I sit on the beach in Cambodia, conflicted by two opposing realities: the need to limit my use of fossil fuels... and my desire to travel.

Here's the environmental problem. Fossil fuels allow vacationers to swim, happily, among faraway coral reefs. But burning fuel to fly there warms the oceans, unhappily killing tiny creatures that build the reef.

Here's the human problem. Part of our brain

Before flying to my volunteer job in Greece, I loaned my electric car (a great investment) to one son to compensate for my use of aviation fuel by decreasing his consumption of gas. And renewable energy from solar panels makes my house carbon neutral for my adult kids while I am travelling.

You too can be an agent of change in your society by choosing your personal carbon busting travel strategy.

You can help save coral reefs, and your kid's future. Australia's magnificent barrier reef is dying, and it is spending \$2 billion for restoration. But this is just a public relations trick by politicians that deny reality.

Any climate change restoration money will be wasted unless they, and 'we', have the brains to phase out the main cause of climate change—fossil fuels.

When not volunteering with refugees in Greece, Peter Nix usually lives in the Cowichan Valley. Read his previous account of work with refugees in Island Tides, 'What do refugees have to do with climate change?' [CLICK HERE](#)



DEADLINE: August 1, 2017

**4<sup>th</sup> Great BC Novel Contest**

Judges: Audrey Thomas and John Lent

Manuscript guidelines on website

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# What's On?

VANCOUVER ISLAND & ALL THE GULF ISLANDS

**Easter Sunday, April 16**  
**South Pender Easter Art Walk**—Tour the studios of 14 South Pender Island artists and artisans; an Easter family tradition; you'll leave inspired! • Noon to 5pm • Find us on FB South Pender Island Easter Art Walk, 250.629.6661 • **SOUTH PENDER**

**Wednesday, April 19**  
**All Candidates Meeting**—sponsored by Brentwood Bay Community Association • 7pm • Stelly's Secondary School • **BRENTWOOD BAY**

**Friday, Saturday, Sunday, April 21-23**  
**Active Pass Nature and Arts Festival 2017**—3-day celebration on Earth Day weekend; over 30 activities: guided hikes, garden tours, boat trips, nature talks, art displays, musical performances, islands pavilions, family activities, locavore dining, live entertainment, and more • \$10 Festival Pass for many free events, special activities \$30 to \$75, more at [www.festivalactivepass.com](http://www.festivalactivepass.com) [click here](#) • **MAYNE**

**Sunday, April 23**  
**Salt Spring Earth Day Celebration**—Fresh air event with live bands and performances, speakers, info booths (still time to call for a booth), yoga, nature-based play for kids, morning yoga at the gazebo, and many other activities; learn, connect, sing, dance, create change, have fun, respect the planet • Centennial Park, Ganges • Noon-5pm, • Free event, everyone welcome • Info: Alex Lyons 250.538.7573 • **SALT SPRING**

**Monday, April 24**  
**All Candidates Meeting**—Sponsored by BC Sustainable Energy Association and Rolling Justice Bus • 6:30pm • Mary Winspear Centre, Sidney • **SIDNEY**

**Sunday, May 7**  
**10th Annual River Never Sleeps Festival**—Celebrate salmon and their ecosystems; fish, family fun, BBQ and booths • Rosewall Creek Hatchery, 8425 Berray Rd, off Hwy 19A, north of the Cook Creek Rd turnoff in Fanny Bay • 10am-3pm • Info: Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society, [www.fbses.ca](http://www.fbses.ca) • **FANNY BAY**

**Sunday, May 7**  
**Ruckle Heritage Farm Day**—Geared toward children and educational farm related themes; heritage farming and crafts; animals, orchard, farm products displays, classic machines, demonstrations, exhibits, activities, food • Beautiful Ruckle Farm • 10am-3pm • Volunteers still needed, contact Marjorie Lane 250-653- 4071 or [rucklefarm@shaw.ca](mailto:rucklefarm@shaw.ca) • **SALT SPRING**

**Wednesday, May 24**  
**22nd Annual Bob Dylan Birthday Party**—An evening listening to or performing your favourite Bob Dylan tunes and celebrating Bob's Nobel Prize in Literature 'for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition' • Galiano Community Hall • Show at 7pm, Bob's cake at 8:30pm • Admission: donation to Galiano Community Land & Housing Trust • Performers or general info please call Tom 250.539.2960 • **GALIANO**

**Next Deadline: Wednesday, April 21**

## School News

John Cameron

The first networked elementary computer lab in British Columbia was located at Fernwood School in the late 1980s where students were fully engaged programming with Logo and Hypercard in problem-solving situations. Students worked in small groups with advanced concepts like recursion—which most adults would find challenging. Mayne Island school had a similar computer lab which was open to the community too.

Skip to 2017 and we still see computer engagement, problem-solving, and technology challenges thriving in Andrew McPhee's Fernwood classroom.

SET-BC Service Coordinator for SDs N°61, N°62, N°63, N° 64, and N°79 Charlotte Friend says: 'Students confidently explore how things work, plan experiments and pursue new ideas, thinking and re-thinking when things don't go as planned. In their own version of 'genius hour'



Photo: Charlotte Friend

students constructed a track for a Sphero robot to follow, made a weather report using the Do Ink app and green screen, created a target and programmed the drone to launch and shoot at it.

'Andrew emboldens their creativity, eager to answer their questions but challenging them to seek their own answers and explore options. Students can be heard to happily exclaim: 'Hey, I read the manual and found out...', 'That was a cool idea to make a weather report.' 'Hey, look what I did!' and 'Just a sec, I'm going to do it again!'

## News Digest

### Revelstoke Dam Expansion

The Revelstoke dam may increase in capacity with a sixth generating unit. BCHydro has applied to the BC Environmental Assessment Office for an Environmental Assessment Certificate. The new proposed unit would add 500 megawatts of capacity to BCHydro's electricity system, and would 'help meet peak demand periods and continue to provide reliable power on the coldest, darkest days of the year', according to a BCHydro statement.

The project costs are estimated at \$582 million, based on the earliest in-service date of 2021. A new generating unit would be added to an existing, empty bay in the Revelstoke powerhouse, and a new capacitor station would be built 19 kilometres west of Summerland. The Revelstoke dam was originally designed for six units, but only four were constructed in the beginning of its lifetime.

A decision by the BC Environmental Assessment Office is expect sometime this year.

### Victoria-Vancouver Ferry Service

Clipper, a vacation and transportation company, has announced that it will be establishing a route between downtown Vancouver and downtown Victoria in the Spring of 2018. The ferry is a 52-metre high-speed catamaran called *Halunder Jet*, which has a capacity of 579 passengers and can move at speeds of up to 36 knots.

This announcement came just after a luxury vacation company, V2V Vacations, released details of their planned route between the two cities, which would begin this spring. However, V2V will charge

\$120 to \$240 for one way 'luxury' transport. Clipper has not yet released its prices.

### Helping Out At The Unist'ot'ten Camp

'Every year we welcome the spring by shaking off those winter cobwebs, picking up a hammer, a saw or a shovel and getting to work,' says Unist'ot'en Solidarity Brigade. The group helps build and support the Unist'ot'ten Camp, the pipeline resistance centre inland from the Great Bear Rainforest on a tributary of Skeena and Bulkley River. The camp is built on Unist'ot'en Territory at Talbits Kwah, where two pipelines are proposed, Northern Gateway, and Pacific Trails.

Each spring, working visitors are encouraged. The work camp this year is May 8-26. Over the last few years the Unist'ot'ten Camp has been transformed with the construction of the pit house, the bunkhouse and the first two stages of the healing centre. 'If you have carpentry skills, or want to learn some, come on up, buckle on a tool belt, and join the construction crew,' says the Solidarity Brigade. Helpers are also encouraged in the permaculture garden which needs a lot of ready hands for preparation and sowing at this time of year.

And there is always work in the kitchen, the woodpile or wherever your skills and interests may lie. Whether you are an Unist'ot'en Camp veteran or this will be your first time up, you will enjoy the challenges and the friendships made. To register and make travel arrangements, go to the Unist'ot'en Solidarity Brigade registration page [CLICK HERE](#).

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# Pembina Institute gives thumbs down on BCLiberal platform

Joshua MacNab, BC director at the Pembina Institute, made the following statement in response to the April 10 release, by BCLiberal Leader Christy Clark, of her party’s 2017 election platform:

‘With its 2017 election platform, the BCLiberal Party has gambled on an economic strategy that fails to build toward a prosperous future powered by clean growth. As other provinces and countries position themselves for success in the clean economy, the platform released today puts BC at risk of being left behind.

‘Under the BCLiberals’ watch, BC has seen backsliding on the commitment to building a clean economy. Despite a strong start in 2008, government inaction means BC has missed the opportunity to meet its legislated 2020 target for carbon pollution. The Climate Leadership Plan put forward in 2016 sees carbon pollution continuing to rise and includes few commitments to ensuring clean economic growth for BC.

‘The platform released today


continues that trend by doubling down on an LNG industry that would be responsible for 20 million tonnes of BC’s carbon pollution in 2050. BC’s legislated 2050 target for carbon pollution is 13 million tonnes. Clearly, LNG is not a climate solution.

‘Building a BC that remains competitive as the world transitions to a clean economy, while standing up for affordability, is essential for securing prosperity for all British Columbians. BC’s next government has a responsibility to get our carbon pollution under control and to defend the health and safety of our families and communities. We did not see that commitment in today’s platform.’ ☞

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### LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that I, **Michael Canaday** from **Mayne Island, BC**, have applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Mayne Island/vicinity of Campbell Bay** fronting **LOT 38, SECTION 10, MAYNE ISLAND, COWICHAN DISTRICT, PLAN 15027**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414535**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: **AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca**. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 28, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: **http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp** for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation’s office in Nanaimo.

### LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that we, **Gary and Donna Bello** from **Saltspring Island, BC**, have applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Saltspring Island in the vicinity of Walker’s Hook** / fronting **LOT A, SECTION 13, RANGE 3 EAST, NORTH SALT SPRING ISLAND, COWICHAN DISTRICT, PLAN 2925, EXCEPT PARTS IN PLANS 4925 AND 5367**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414536**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: **AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca**. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 28, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: **http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp** for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation’s office in Nanaimo.

### LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that we, **Robert and Veronica Euper** from **Mayne Island, BC**, have applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Mayne Island/vicinity of Dinner Bay** / fronting **LOT 229, SECTION 6, MAYNE ISLAND, COWICHAN DISTRICT, PLAN 23981**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414515**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: **AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca**. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 28, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: **http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp** for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation’s office in Nanaimo.

### LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that we, **ANNE DENISE CASHIN and JOHN BASIL CASHIN** from **Ganges, BC**, have applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Saltspring Island /vicinity of Stuart Channel** / fronting **LOT A SECTION 8 RANGE 2 WEST NORTH SALT SPRING ISLAND COWICHAN DISTRICT PLAN 19010**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File #1414546**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: **AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca**. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 31, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: **http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp** for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation’s office in Nanaimo.

### LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that I, **Raymond Quing Leung Tong** from **Saltspring Island, BC**, has applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Stuart Channel / fronting Lot3, Section 7, Range 2 West, North Salt Spring Island, Cowichan District, Plan 36401**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414443**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: **AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca**. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 22, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: **http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp** for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation’s office in Nanaimo.

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Some would agree... that statement's a joke,  
Her axing and taxing has left us all broke.  
She gives with one hand then takes it back double  
She's aware of no trouble outside of her bubble.  
With a surplus of millions and a prosperity fund  
Perhaps she could spare us a little refund.  
Now she promises, next year medicare will be halved  
Does she think the electorate are all half daft.  
Four years down the road, does she think we'll forget  
On the odd's of that happening I would not make a bet.  
So it sounds like she knows she has nothing to fear  
When it's time to deliver she'll be nowhere near  
Promises, promises, we've heard them before  
Perhaps it is time to show Christy the door.  
—Ann McLean

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Photo: Mike Yip

The final chapter (for us) of the herring spawn is the massive influx of ducks and gulls that feast on the herring roe to bulk up their energy reserves for their migration north. Huge rafts numbering tens of thousands of Surf Scoters, Greater Scaup, and many other diving ducks and gulls are a common sight offshore after the herring have spawned. It's difficult to capture the magnitude of the event, but I have fun trying.

## Marine protected areas are one piece of a complex puzzle - David Suzuki

The federal government recently created two marine protected areas in the Pacific region and has committed to increase ocean protection from 1% to 10% by 2020. Will this be enough?

Canada has the longest coastline of any nation, but our country doesn't end at its ocean shores. With a 200-nautical-mile economic zone and international obligations, Canada is responsible for almost three million square kilometres of ocean, an area roughly the size of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba combined.

Although that's a big area, thinking of the ocean in square kilometres is just skimming the surface. The ocean isn't just a cold, wet seascape blanketed by howling winds. Below the surface, life thrives throughout the water column, top to bottom, warm or cold, winter or summer.

Northern aquatic food webs are rich with creatures of all shapes and sizes, from tiny plankton, urchins and sea stars to fish, orcas and sea lions. That the world's largest living creature ever, the blue whale, feeds on some of the smallest, plankton, is astonishing in itself. The plankton thread in the foodweb doesn't end in the whale's stomach; whale poop is also a critical part of the marine food web, cycling surface nutrients to creatures at the bottom.

The way otters keep kelp forests healthy by eating sea urchins is one of myriad interconnected relationships in Canadian coastal waters. Although barnacles and clams live in a single location, some whales and fish travel thousands of kilometres within a single season. Salmon don't even have the ocean as a boundary, swimming far inland to spawn.

How can we understand and manage such complex systems? Natural cycles in Canada's coastal waters include currents, tides, upwellings, migrations and seasons. Trying to predict how multiple factors like pollution, industrial fishing, climate change, ocean acidification, glass sponge reefs, ships, rights and title claims, kayakers, recreational fishing lodges and renewable energy sites will interact with these cycles is becoming increasingly more complicated, and important,

than ever. With all these uncertainties and complexities, how can we know if marine protected areas are effective?

To understand how creating a refuge works, let's go back to a simple 1936 study of an 'ecosystem'. It was a test tube with two microscopic single cell species, prey and predator. In that oversimplified ecosystem, the predatory species ate the prey, and then died because, without prey, they could not survive.

Putting material in the test tube so the prey could hide and multiply changed everything, creating a variety of unpredictable outcomes. However, one pattern emerged: It was far more likely that both prey and predator would survive.

Expanding the concept to marine protected areas, this simple experiment bodes well for one top predator (humans) and prey (fish). Even though science can't predict whether protected areas will help specific stocks increase, evidence suggests they show promise as 'nurseries' for fish and other ocean wildlife and can provide a buffer against our lack of understanding.

Canada's two new Pacific marine protected areas shield magnificent, fragile glass sponge reefs near Haida Gwaii and important seabird nesting sites on the Scott Islands. Safeguards are in place to protect the glass sponge reefs and the countless species that use them for refuge. However, current protections for the area surrounding the Scott Islands are too vague to reduce threats to the millions of seabirds that depend on the forage area to breed and feed.

The federal government deserves credit for beginning to develop a network of marine protected areas. They're an essential part of keeping ocean ecosystems healthy, but they must have meaningful safeguards. Protected areas are just one aspect of keeping coastal ecosystems healthy. Responsible stewardship also requires effective fisheries management, strong penalties for polluters and a global carbon emissions reduction.

With pollution, climate change and increased shipping and development along Canada's coast, it's more important than ever to reduce the risks to ecosystems that provide us with the fish we eat, the air we breathe and the bounty of nature we love. Marine protected areas on their own won't be enough to do all that, but with strong regulations and safeguards, they're one piece of the intricate, multidimensional puzzle.

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Communications Specialist Panos Grames.

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# NEW FEATURE! - THE LONG READ

## Reforming the Standing Orders of the House of Commons - a Green approach - Elizabeth May, MP

On April 3rd, 2017, Elizabeth held a press conference and released a report detailing a number of changes which could be made to the rules and procedures governing the House of Commons in order to improve the democratic legitimacy, sustainability and functionality of Canada's Parliament.

Video footage of the press conference can be viewed, [click here](#). Meanwhile, a pdf copy of the report can be viewed, [click here](#).

### 1. Basic Principles:

The 21st Century Parliament must reflect the best practice for Canadians, democracy, and the sustainability of the working life of Members of Parliament.

Our Westminster parliamentary system has been distorted over the decades as political parties gain more power. Our system looks increasingly presidential; but our system of government is not. Every 'reform' of the Standing Orders has enhanced the powers of the majority in the interests of 'efficiency'.

The role of Members of Parliament has been made increasingly unequal and less democratic. In our initial parliamentary gatherings, MPs were seen as equal, with even the prime minister seen as 'first among equals' (primus inter pares). The growth in the power of political parties has steadily reduced the scope of action of individual members of parliament. Some of this has been incremental and accomplished through unwritten rules. Some has been the result of highly specific changes concretised in Standing Orders and legislation. The general drift has been toward increasingly centralizing the powers of the executive (prime minister and Privy Council) at the expense of the legislative.

In 2008, a report from the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Queen's University concluded that Canada's Parliament is 'executive-centred, party-dominated [and] adversarial.' Even if the new government continues efforts to democratise parliament, without legislated and rule-bound changes, the characteristics of excessive party and PMO control remain a threat.

In the current discussion paper, the workings of the House are presented as a contest between parties as opposed to a place of deliberative democracy among members. This sentence from the March 2017 discussion paper is a good example of the failure to see parliament in Westminster terms:

'The impetus of all major reforms has had a common theme: a recalibration of the rules to balance the desire of the minority's right to be heard with the majority's duty to pass its legislative agenda.'

This characterization sounds fair and reasonable, but, in reality, it is appalling.

What is being proposed is that Parliament is all about the executive pressing through an agenda as long as the minority has its chance to squawk a bit.

Ideally, the parliament we create should reflect what Canadians want. Thanks to the Government of Canada's recent Vox Pop Labs exercise, we know that 70% of Canadians do not want one big party making all the decisions. Despite the fact that the question was weighted to suggest a response in favour of such a system, the Vox Pop respondents overwhelmingly said they would prefer a system in which a number of smaller parties worked together, even if it takes longer.

This finding puts in doubt the underlining assumption of the government discussion paper that the Liberals have a mandate to 'modernize' parliament to make majority decisions faster.

There is no evidence for this proposition. On the contrary, the mandate in any reform should be to promote processes and procedures leading to respectful, collaborative decision-making.

If we want to do what Canadians want, we will do everything possible to reduce the climate of competitive hyper-partisanship. If we want to build the kind of parliament Canadians hope for, we must find ways to make parliament more respectful, more collaborative

and more cooperative. The ideal legislative achievements of a renewed and reformed parliament would be legislation that reflected a political consensus.

### A. How can we reduce political partisan conflict in Parliament?

One attractive option would be to eliminate political parties. The reality that it is impossible to do so is clear when one considers the entrenched interests of the parties and the impossibility of any decision to end their own claim on power and the hope of power.

Political parties are not mentioned in our Constitution. Westminster parliamentary democracy

**'Procedure  
may be boring to some, but it's about the  
distribution and exercise of power. It really matters.'**

—The Honourable Jack Straw, *Last Man Standing: Memoirs of a Political Survivor*,  
(London: MacMillan) 2012.

could function very well without any political parties, but with a House of MPs, each elected based on their personal attributes and commitment to represent their constituents, second only to their commitment to protect and defend the national interest. Such a House would pick the Prime Minister and cabinet from among their number.

Prof Hugo Cyr of University of Quebec at Montreal has proposed that following an election, the House of Commons should vote to elect a prime minister. This could take place between the election of the Speaker of the House and the Speech from the Throne. This is neither radical nor undemocratic. We have a system of government by which the election of members of parliament determines which party will form government. The party that forms government has already chosen its leader under its internal constitution, through big US-style conventions. Cyr believes it is important to have such a vote, even if it is only symbolic, in order to underscore our system of government. He cites the fact that in a recent poll over half of Canadians think we directly elect a prime minister; which we do not.

If our Parliament were based on non-aligned MPs, our voting system would not need reform. It is only due to the overlaying of political parties and their top-down control over members that the First Past the Post System (FPTP) fails us so badly. The FPTP system invariably creates a mismatch between the popular vote and the seat count for the political parties.

It is also only due to FPTP that striving for political consensus is out of favour. The system of rewards and punishments under FPTP creates incentives for 'gotcha' politics, wedge issues and a targeted appeal to a party's 'base.' It mitigates against the call to higher purpose, a shared vision and a cooperative agenda.

I urge the House Leaders and fellow MPs to consider that the reason it is harder and harder to have a smoothly running parliament is not our rules; it is a worsening political climate of constant electioneering. The toxic drip on our democracy comes from our voting system. The best way to improve the level of discourse and cooperation across party lines is to return to the promise to replace FPTP with a system of fair voting in which the seat count and the popular vote are closely matched.

### B. How can we create a more respectful parliament within the current perverse voting system?

Anything we do to break down the 'us versus them' mentality of Parliament will be helpful. Can we consider changing seating within the House? What if MPs were

seated alphabetically, and not by party? What if MPs were seated according to province or region, regardless of the banner under which they were elected?

What if we actually lived the fiction described by former Speaker Scheer in his ruling on Mark Warawa's complaint that he had been silenced by his party whip?

Scheer ruled, 'The right to seek the floor at any time is the right of each individual Member of Parliament and is not dependent on any other Member of Parliament... If members want to be recognized, they will have to actively demonstrate that they wish to participate. They have to rise in their places and seek the floor.'

Thus, no change in rules is needed to eliminate the control of party whips and the recent and inane obsession with 'QP prep.'

What if members rose in their seat, attempted to catch the Speaker's eye? What if questions were, as our rules require, not being read in talking points, but actually posed in an effort to gain answers, accountability, and information?

What if committees changed the decision making process away from majority vote, and moved to a disciplined process based on seeking consensus? I still believe that if the Special Committee on Electoral Reform had had a decision-making model that allowed us to work for more hours, through weekends within a consensus model, we would have arrived at one proposal supported by all, instead of a majority report reflecting support from all but the Liberal members.

What if chairs of committee rotated? What if no additional salary were given, but all members of the committee had a turn as chair and all worked to achieve the best possible bill based on the evidence they receive from witnesses and policy experts within government?

### 2. Parliamentary Calendar Must Consider Its Climate Impact

Thus far, debates about the number of days we sit has only related to convenience for MPs and comparison with provincial sittings. But Canada is an enormous country and flying MPs on a weekly basis to and from Ottawa has an enormous impact on greenhouse gas emissions. It is also a very large financial cost for the public purse. The cost of flights is not one felt personally by any MP. All flights and business class tickets are paid for by the public. Shortening the work week to four days actually increases the likelihood that every MP, every weekend, will be travelling. While some are close enough to Ottawa to take the train, most are not.

Ironically, buying carbon off-sets is the only MP expense not considered to be eligible for expensing.

The large tension for many MPs is getting home to their families. This is also a particular challenge in Canada—more than in the UK or any province.

I do not know that there is a perfect solution, but I want to propose a work cycle similar to that of Atlantic Canada workers in Fort McMurray—a concentrated three to four weeks in Ottawa and then three to four weeks in the riding.

I propose we sit a six day week in Ottawa to get the maximum value and productivity of concentrated sittings—Monday to Friday and a half day on Saturday.

It is clear that a well-intentioned proposal to eliminate Friday sittings is seen by the public as an attempt to shirk our work. MPs and many journalists will know that is not true, but it is too easy a target in the age of 'gotcha' politics. No one will think MPs are shirking if we work a six day parliamentary schedule.

A six day work week over three weeks is more than



## NEW FEATURE! • THE LONG READ

### Reforming the Standing Orders of the House of Commons

...continued from page 13

enough to get a great deal of work done. It will likely cut the costs to the public of flights to the riding by more than half, likely by two thirds. It will also slash the GHG emissions of our travel.

Clearly, the biggest drawback will be to MPs with families living far from Ottawa. Consideration for more financial assistance for families to relocate to Ottawa is worth considering. The cost in overtime to Parliamentary staff will have to be considered as well.

#### 3. Management of the House

##### A. Ensuring that prorogation is never again used illegitimately:

Shutting down the House of Commons to avoid a vote the governing party and Prime Minister know will be lost is virtually unheard of in Westminster parliaments of all Commonwealth nations. In fact, if not for the Canadian experience, it would be totally without precedent. A prime minister in Sri Lanka tried it once, but the Governor General refused.

It has happened in Canada two times: once under Sir John A Macdonald (the Pacific scandal) and once under Stephen Harper in November 2008. Harper later prorogued again by phoning the Governor General, but without the immediate threat of a vote he was about to lose. In Sir John A Macdonald's case, when the house resumed, it immediately dissolved and an election was held.

The government discussion paper states: 'There have been instances where Governments have prorogued early in the session to avoid politically difficult situations. The Government committed to Canadians not to abuse prorogation in such a manner.'

The fact that the government discussion paper presents this outrageous abuse of power in bland terms is somewhat unnerving. Stephen Harper's violation of parliamentary norms made it clear how much of our system depends on those with power choosing not to exercise it illegitimately. We have been bound by unwritten rules and invisible threads. The willingness of Stephen Harper to break those traditions brought to light how vulnerable we are to those who do not respect traditions. Had he not sought prorogation in 2008, we would not be discussing it now. It was unheard of; until it was not.

Professor Hugo Cyr made a specific recommendation on prorogation in the course of his testimony before the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE):

'Therefore my ... proposal is to amend the Standing Orders of the House of Commons so that asking for Parliament to be prorogued or dissolved without first obtaining the approval of the House of Commons automatically results in a loss of confidence in the Prime Minister. Consequently, the Governor General would not be bound by a prime minister's advice requesting the early dissolution or prorogation of Parliament without first obtaining the approval of the House of Commons.'

The details of testing for parliamentary support were drawn from UK experience by Prof Cyr:

'With regard to the possibility of a successor government should the House of Commons pass a non-confidence motion, I relied on the United Kingdom legislation. The *Fixed-term Parliaments Act* provides that where the government is defeated on a vote of confidence, an election will not be called until 14 days later, if there is no subsequent resolution to restore confidence in that same government or in the successor government that would have been formed in the meantime. Third, I propose to amend section 56.1 of the *Canada Elections Act* to allow for the early dissolution of Parliament with the approval of two-thirds of the members of the House of Commons. This enhances the role of members of Parliament. Once again, this proposal is based on an example of the British *Fixed-term Parliaments Act*. This is intended to give more

weight to members of Parliament.'

This approach was also supported by Prof Peter Russell of the University of Toronto. Professor Russell is professor emeritus and one of Canada's most respected political scientists. Both Cyr and Russell recommended the approach of the vote in order to ensure that access to prorogation be restricted only to a Prime Minister who can approach the Governor General with the clear confidence of the House. Both also recommended that we change our standing rules to allow motions for a 'constructive non-confidence' vote.

It was described by Professor Russell's written evidence:

'Some parliaments—Germany, Spain and Sweden are examples—permit only constructive non-confidence votes. A constructive non-confidence vote is one that names an alternative prime minister. When a constructive non-confidence vote passes, it both defeats the incumbent government and indicates how a new, viable minority government can be formed without calling an election. This practice underlines the principle that in a parliamentary democracy the people elect a parliament (more precisely the confidence chamber of parliament) not a government. In Canada, regulating confidence votes is a matter that falls into the informal part of our constitutional system under the control of the House of Commons. I urge your committee in its research and travel to look carefully at how parliaments function under a system that requires confidence votes to be constructive.'

As Prof Hugo Cyr pointed out, 'This is a mechanism to prevent the opposition parties from joining forces to overthrow a government and from taking advantage of an early election to increase their number of seats.'

##### B. While fixing the risk of prorogation, let's also set a maximum time between an election and the first sitting of Parliament:

Currently, there is no set requirement for an incoming government to convene parliament within a fixed time. While this loophole has not yet been abused by a prime minister who finds it more convenient to rule by executive fiat—without convening parliament—given the trend toward greater concentration of power in the executive, it is time to ensure parliament be opened within a set time period following an election.

I cite again the written evidence to ERRE of Prof Peter Russell:

'Canada is virtually alone among parliamentary democracies in not having a rule requiring that after an election only a short time can elapse before the newly elected parliament meets. After an election, if no party has won a majority of seats, there must be time for party leaders to work out who has the best chance of forming a government with majority support, for a new prime minister (if there is one) to be sworn in, and for the prime minister to form a cabinet and prepare a throne speech, before the Governor General summons the new parliament. In Canada, other than the constitutional requirement that there be a sitting of Parliament every twelve months, there is no rule or established practice about the maximum time allowed before a new Parliament hold its first meeting. This produces unnecessary uncertainty and worry about implementing the results of the election. When no party has a majority in the new House of Commons, it delays the test of whether a new government has the confidence of the House and therefore has the right to govern.'

'Australia has a rule that the Commonwealth Parliament must meet 30 days after an election. New Zealand has what amounts to an eight week rule. That should be the outside limit. Most European parliaments have shorter periods. The rule should take the form of an amendment to section 38 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. Such an amendment can be made by an Act of

Parliament.'

Professor Cyr recommended that we follow the example of the United Kingdom and New Zealand in developing a Cabinet manual, by consensus.

'The British experience showed us how effective and useful such a manual can be when in 2010 none of the parties won a majority of seats. That evening, there were no rushed media calls of the type, 'If the trend holds, the next government will be formed by...' The political parties were given the time they needed to negotiate among themselves who would form the next government, rather than allowing the media to decide that very evening who would be the next prime minister. This is a step forward for democracy.'

##### C. Electronic voting:

While the government discussion paper refers to some aspects of modernization from the UK, electronic voting by MPs is not one of them. The most recent edition of handbook on UK parliamentary procedures, *How Parliament Works*, (Rogers and Walters), relates the current state of debate in the UK:

'...for many people the idea of taking a quarter of an hour of valuable parliamentary time on a vote is inexplicable. Why not vote electronically? There is a good case for it, but also some powerful arguments against...

'...for many MPs a powerful argument for the present system is that it collects large numbers of members together for a few minutes, often at a predictable time. This brings backbench and frontbench MPs together (and many backbenchers may not actually see very much of those in government) and is a valuable opportunity to buttonhole ministers, or to gather support for some initiative... For most MPs, this adds a great deal of value to the otherwise often mundane business of voting.'

For my part, as the leader of an unrecognized, but nationally engaged parliamentary party, I find the current voting system valuable in many ways. I believe it is important that members be physically present. Voting from our home ridings is not an acceptable option. It is not 'modernization'; it is dereliction of duty.

I also think it can impact how we vote to see prominent MPs vote in ways that may break from party discipline. It can encourage others to do the same. I know that I have actually changed the way I plan to vote on rare occasions when someone I respect casts a vote I didn't expect.

However, there is no question that our current system could be improved with an electronic innovation. I propose that we vote as now, with the Speaker calling for all those voting yay, and then nay. As we stand in sequence, each MP can simultaneously push a button, wired to our desks, to signal our vote and lock it in electronically. This will relieve the Table Officers of confusion as they call out our names. The totals of our votes would be more quickly confirmed.

I also believe we should have the opportunity to record an abstention. Our current system makes no distinction between an absent member and one in the chamber who wishes to abstain.

##### D. Routine Proceedings:

I can see no justification for changing our approach to Routine Proceedings. The attempt to do so in the government discussion paper is to remove one of the few remaining tools of opposition parties to get the government's attention. There are a litany of procedures we used to have that have been removed by government parties that found the opposition annoying. Any significant show of defiance will get the process changed in the name of streamlining.

REFORMING PARLIAMENT, please scroll to next page



# NEW FEATURE! • THE LONG READ

## Reforming the Standing Orders of the House of Commons ...continued from page 14

Remember the incident of the ringing of the bells? In 1982, the bells rang for six days as Progressive Conservatives protested the Liberals' national energy programme. Or in 1999, when the Alliance Party brought 700 amendments to the Nisga'a treaty at report stage? Those opportunities are gone. Government parties can keep changing the rules to deprive opposition parties of making their point, but new ways will be found. As noted above, it is far better to find ways to foster cooperation than hard-wire parliament for bulldozer passage of bills.

### 4. Management of Debate

#### A. Time Allocation

The government discussion paper proposal for programming is one of its most controversial. It could certainly never be accepted and could never work if the change to that system was not approved unanimously by parties in the House. The paper highlights the use of programing in the Westminster parliament in the UK and notes it was brought in initially as an experiment. But the government paper oversimplifies some aspects of the UK procedure. It does not apply to every bill, nor would it work at all in the UK without substantial consensus, each time, in advance.

In 1997, the Modernization Committee of the UK parliament suggested programming as a half-way measure between informal agreement between House leaders and guillotine. The approach in the UK is that when a bill is proposed for programming, discussions take place between all sides of the House, including backbenchers. It is not exclusively a decision of House Leaders. The type of committee to study the bill is agreed upon. The decision is made immediately after second reading. There is no debate on the use of the measure, so consensus is key.

The UK parliament also makes use of draft bills. In the draft bill process MPs from all sides of the House work to develop the best bill. At least in theory, the process is de-politicized because 'ministers have invested less political capital in it, and changes will not necessarily be seen as defeats.'

It certainly could be considered in our parliament, but much more work needs to be done. Nothing should be imposed without unanimity. Despite its broad acceptance in the UK, it can still be 'bitterly disputed'.

#### B. Questions:

The proposal to move to the UK style of Question Period is to adopt the practice of having the Prime Minister answer questions only one day a week. Of course, the UK parliament has entirely different rules for questions to government ministers and to the prime minister. Most questions must be submitted days in advance. Even the right to pose urgent questions must be put to the speaker the day of the question period. No questions are ever asked without notice to the government.

Our parliament has gone a different way.

We should not pursue one modernization feature from the City of Westminster without looking at the full ambit of approaches in the UK. While our parliaments share common roots, the trees of our modern parliament have grown in different directions.

MPs in parliamentary debate in the UK can rise during a colleague's speech and if that member 'gives way', the questioner may speak without being recognized by the speaker. There are no such things as 'recognized parties' in the UK parliament. Not all MPs

can fit in the chamber at the same time. And the current plan in the UK is to redraw boundaries to reduce the number of MPs by 50.

None of those things are happening, or are allowed, in our parliament.

Do we want to review all our rules and measure them against Westminster? In the case of our Question Period, we have a whole culture of a different approach. Do we want to pull the aspects we like from the UK without regard to the broader differences in our current practice?

#### C. Omnibus bills

I support the proposal to clearly empower the Speaker to disallow attempts to place unrelated bills under the same rubric, especially in the guise of budget bills. This subterfuge was used in the Harper minority government to force through changes that the opposition parties were unwilling to defeat if they were not yet ready to go to an election.

The Speaker in the ruling in response to my point of order challenging 2012's C-38 omnibus budget bill ruled that without the House providing clear guidance, the Speaker cannot rule an 'omnibus bill' out of order nor could he split the bill. Having all parties in the House agree to the criteria of a common theme to unify any attempted omnibus bill is guidance the Speaker needs.

### 5. Management of Committees:

This section significantly misrepresents the treatment of parliamentary parties with fewer than 12 elected MPs. I am the leader of a federal political party that ran 336 candidates in the last election and has run full slates since 2004. In 2015, Green candidates received over 605,000 votes, despite a strong tide for 'strategic' voting that cut our support in half in the last few days of the campaign. My seat in parliament is as a named Green MP. I am not an independent.

The motion drafted by the Harper PMO and pushed through every committee, only to be pushed through the newly constituted committees following the 2015 election by the Trudeau PMO is not 'expanding the role of independent MPs.'

It is eliminating a right that exists under our current standing rules. It is coercive and represents the first time in the long history of parliament that a majority government, much less two in a row, have used their muscle to shut down the rights of a single MP. I have never used this new 'opportunity' to present amendments in committee without protesting to each and every committee that I did not want to be forced to bring amendments to committee. I want to exercise the right I already have to bring substantive amendments at Report Stage.

As for offering that MPs representing parties with fewer than 12 MPs can be ex officio members of committees is an improvement, but still a condescension. There are multiple examples of MPs in parties with fewer than 12 MPs, and even of actual independent MPs being full members of committees. One need only reach back to the 35th Parliament to find that NDP members were associate members of a number of standing committees, despite the caucus being unrecognized with only 9 elected MPs. Even independent members have been full voting members of standing committees as recently as 2007. Only tradition blocks this decision. As all of us are equal and all of our electoral districts are equal and all Canadians are equal, full rights on committees are long overdue.

The misunderstanding about the status of MPs in parties with fewer than 12 MPs originated in the 1963 legislation to give larger parties public funds.

Only recognized parties were entitled to additional

financial resources. In all other respects, members of smaller parties and independents had all the same rights as MPs in larger parties.

Over time, with no further changes of the rules, it became practice to exclude MPs from parties with fewer than 12 seats from parliamentary standing committees, from time in question period and from use of various parliamentary procedures, such as Supply Day motions. Exceptions were made. Shortly after the new rules came in, when the Raillie Creditiste split off from the Social Credit Party, the Social Credit Party dropped to 11 members. Still they were allowed to be seated as a recognized party and had access to the procedures—if not the money—they had once had. But the larger parties continued to undercut smaller parties.

In 1990, the Bloc took a run at the argument. The Bloc went up against the actual rule that parties with fewer than 12 seats should not have access to additional funds. The Bloc asked the Speaker directly to rule it had a right to additional monies. The Speaker at the time, the Hon John Fraser denied their request, but did not suggest small parties had no rights:

'...it is important to note that the decision does not mean that the members in this group are impeded from full participation in the work of the House or that they are being deprived of support necessary to represent their constituents adequately.'

'To date these efforts [to get research funds from the BoIE] have proven unsuccessful, but it is a long and dangerous leap to conclude from there that the basic rights and privileges of those Members are somehow being abrogated. A search of the Debates will show, on the contrary, that the honourable Member for Shefford and his colleagues have been extended every courtesy by this House and that *the Chair has safeguarded their participation in ways that are fully in keeping with our procedure and practices.*' (emphasis added)

Despite Speaker Fraser's defence of other 'basic rights and privileges' for MPs in smaller parties, by 1994, the presumption that MPs in parties with fewer than 12 members were to be relegated to rear corners in the back of the House and be denied daily time in Question Period had become solidified.

It is time to revisit the rigidity of what has no basis in legislation. Without granting public funds to smaller parties, the rights and privileges of MPs as equals must be restored.

### Conclusion:

I do not oppose changing our Standing Orders. Many needed improvements are critical. Ensuring that the legislative supremacy of Parliament is respected is crucial. We must never again have a Prime Minister operate as a one-man, (or one-woman), top-down elected dictatorship. The need for a fair voting system remains at the top of the list in protecting Parliament from hyper-partisanship.

We need to protect our parliament from abusive prorogations and perverse, illegitimate omnibus bills. There is much we can do together, but the timeline must be reasonable. It must embrace a process that provides adequate time and a fair process for full parliamentary consensus. The current Liberal motion before PROC does not provide either.

My own view is that we need not read ill-intention into the draft discussion paper and process. I take the Government House Leader at her word. This was a trial balloon. It is now a burst balloon, but it got the discussion going. Let's move to the next steps, and with good will on all sides, let's start down the road to significant reforms. 🍷

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