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Photo: North Cowichan as taken from Glenora facing North - WWIND file photo

THE LOCAL BEAUTY AND THE GLOBAL BEAST

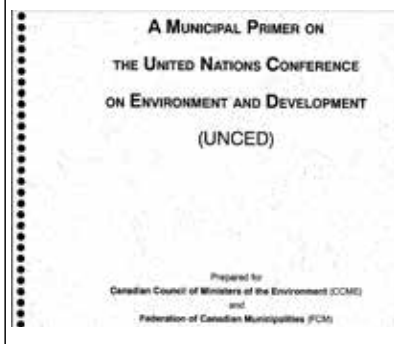
Last month, we had the privilege of touring and engaging with several farmers who shared their experiences of government intervention and the challenges posed by provincial and local policies. While exploring these expansive and productive farms, we took to the skies to capture the natural beauty of the valley we proudly call home.

From the majestic mountains to the vast oceans, our eyes beheld a lush, life-sustaining tapestry of evergreen and deciduous trees intertwined with estuaries and waterways. It's truly a blessing to reside in this land that provides us with clean air and sustenance while others may not be as fortunate. And what's the secret to our good fortune? It's the freedom to innovate, create sources of heat and sustenance, and cultivate this fertile land. So, why does it sometimes appear that our municipalities and regional boards are determined to regress us to a bygone era? They're removing affordable heat sources like Natural Gas and putting pressure on local food producers through water restrictions and more.

We're witnessing a barrage of policies that seem to impede our path toward greater self-sustainability and prosperity. These policies are emerging rapidly and seem to be adopted uniformly across municipalities in lock-step, with initiatives such as the BC step code acceleration and calls to rename Natural Gas to Fossil Gas. Many of these policies originate from various sources, including staff proposals and mass letters sent out by NGOs like The Climate Caucus. A deeper dive into these organizations reveals a well-resourced and highly coordinated network that guides their followers on strategies to approach local councils, including booklets with names such as "How to infiltrate councils."

The Historical Context: The recent surge in policies that hinder our journey toward self-sustainability and prosperity appears to be part of a larger agenda. This agenda, which can be traced back to Prime Minister Mulroney's signing of Agenda 21 in the '90s, (currently Agenda 2030) seems to cast a shadow over modern domestic lifestyles and livelihoods.: The influence, if not unknowingly, has woven itself into the fabric of our local governance since at least 1994. The Municipal Primer, a guide on implementing UN agendas without public knowledge or consent, laid the groundwork for a quiet yet impactful transformation in our local policies.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities recognizes its role in advocating for green disaster mitigation, adaptation investments, and resilient infrastructure to support local climate action. However, the fact that these directions come from entities like the Union of BC Municipalities Municipalities (UBCM), rather than from the citizens of the constituency, raises questions about the democratic process. For instance, at a recent Council Meeting on October 4th, despite overwhelming public opposition to the BC step code acceleration, four councillors deferred to the Climate Action and Energy Policy, seemingly prioritizing it over public input, with one council member stating that they take direction from the UBCM. One reason behind this acceleration of policy started with a letter sent in 2019 by a local NGO, calling for the declaration of a climate emergency in all local governments. Despite limited signatures and a lack of scientific evidence supporting the declaration, this letter led to a permanent change in policies across all municipalities, including the updating of initiatives like the Climate Action Plan.


A Municipal Primer on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

Prepared for
Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME)
and
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

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WHAT'S INSIDE

- Local needs fall second to global forces
- Taxes and provincial drug sites close local businesses
- Netherlands: Farmers in distress
- The Dinsdale Farm debacle
- Local council cancels energy choices
- Local business held hostage to tax-exemptions
- AND MORE!

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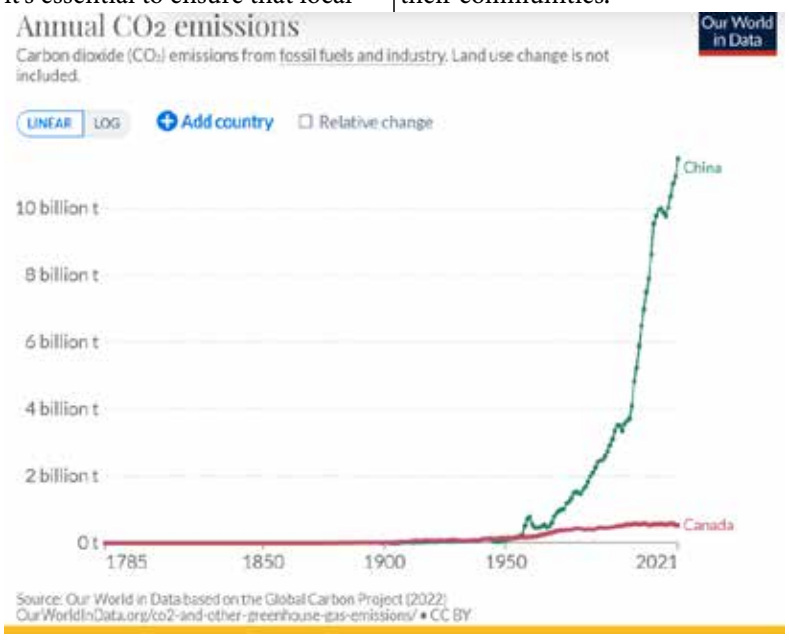
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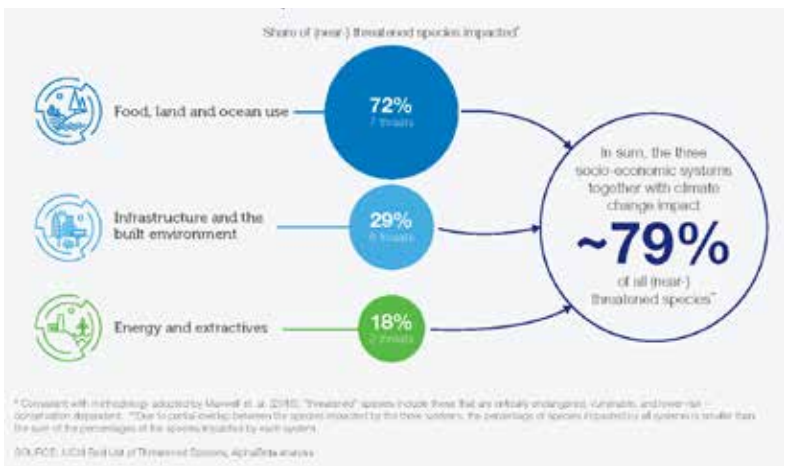
The Significance: Local policies no longer seem to be in sync with local needs or the capacity for innovation in our local environment. Every local policy now undergoes a climate assessment, eclipsing considerations of housing, food security, or economic development.

For instance, consider the challenges faced by farmers this year, waiting for water licenses or proving their water supply isn't connected to a specific source based on climate considerations. These hurdles can create food security issues on the island, particularly in times of crisis.

Additionally, the accelerated BC step code implementation, which ignored builder input and disregarded public opposition, raises questions about the measurability of local climate efforts. If these efforts could be quantified, perhaps more individuals would be motivated to contribute. However, according to local climate specialists, even after implementing all the measures outlined in the plans, including phasing out vehicles and natural gas, our emissions will not be measurable as contributing any significance to global emission goals. Moreover, when water restrictions are imposed to protect fish populations, we seldom see reports showing the positive environmental impact of such sacrifices. Transparent data and evidence of how carbon taxes are being used to combat climate change are notably absent.

In conclusion, as global 2030 sustainability goals gain traction, it's essential to ensure that local policies align with local needs, promote innovation, and are backed by transparent data and evidence. The complex web of influence on local policies requires careful scrutiny, and citizens must have a say in shaping the future of their communities.





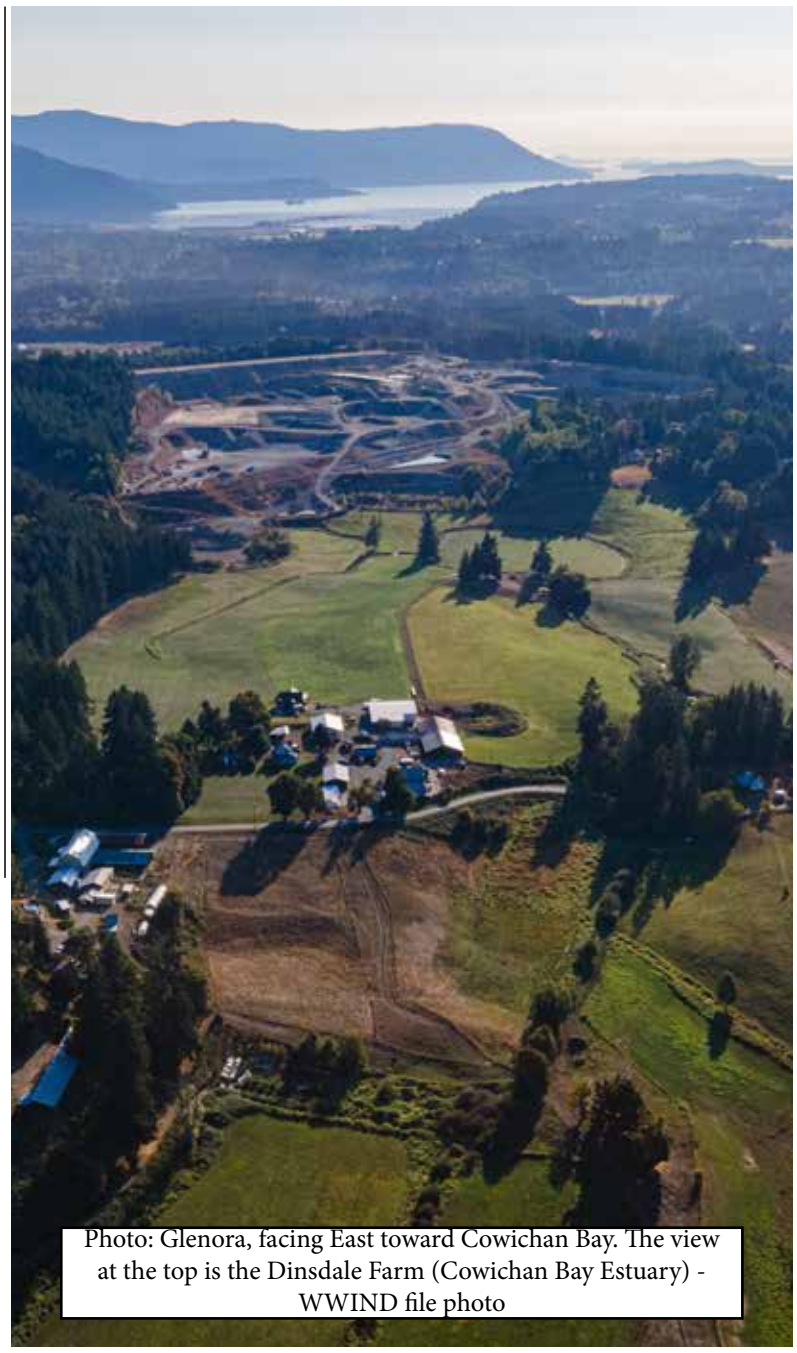


Photo: Glenora, facing East toward Cowichan Bay. The view at the top is the Dinsdale Farm (Cowichan Bay Estuary) - WWIND file photo



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THE NATURAL GAS DEBATE: LOCAL COUNCILS AND ENERGY CHOICES

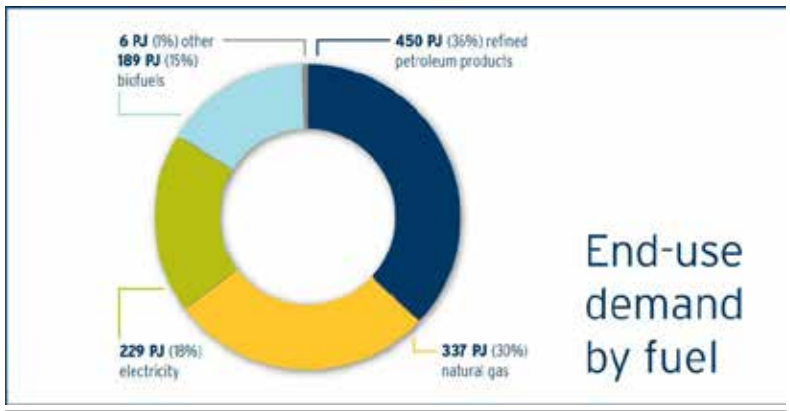


Photo: Where does BC's energy come from? - talkingenergy.ca

Across the island, local councils appear to be adopting a unified stance on the demonization and restriction of natural gas. This trend, observed in policies ranging from tree bylaws to natural gas restrictions, raises questions about whether these policies truly address the unique needs of our communities or serve some broader agenda.

A recent letter sent to all councils by a member of the Climate Caucus NGO advocating for changing the term "Natural Gas" to "Fossil Gas" to eliminate any confusion about its source. However, this proposal lacked substantial justification, as natural gas is not derived from fossils. Additionally, a local NGO, linked to a global counterpart, presented questionable studies suggesting a link between natural gas cooking and childhood asthma, casting doubts on the validity of such claims.

Natural gas has a long history in British Columbia, dating back over a century to its discovery in Haney along the Fraser River. It has since grown to supply about 30% of the province's energy needs, particularly during the coldest months. FortisBC, while not a producer of natural gas, plays a crucial role in delivering it to homes and businesses, alongside electricity infrastructure in Kelowna. Their recent study revealed that transitioning Kelowna to 100% BC Hydro would be costly (in the billions) and require additional power sources, likely from Alberta.

The B.C. government has entered into 64 natural gas pipeline benefits agreements with 29 eligible First Nations (more than 90%) located along four proposed natural gas pipeline routes. These agreements are helping to establish long-term working relationships that include sharing benefits associated with the natural gas pipelines and providing support for LNG development that is environmentally and socially responsible, and respectful of Aboriginal rights. Would these relationships be threatened if we reduced N.G. Usage?

The question arises: Does North Cowichan and the CVRD possess the grid capacity to rely solely on BC Hydro, and would this result in reduced costs or escalating bills? Many view natural gas as a more cost-effective heating option, with some local electricians we spoke to converting their homes to natural gas to save on monthly expenses. Affordability in energy choices is crucial, especially considering that more global fatalities occur due to cold-related issues than heat-related ones. We heard from a woman who works as an in-home nurse who told us stories of going into seniour's homes in the winter noticing they had many layers of clothing on and the heat off or at a minimum because they couldn't afford to heat in the winter.

FortisBC sees tremendous potential for biofuels in its natural gas system. By capturing the methane generated by landfills and farming operations, this Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) can heat BC homes and businesses. FortisBC was the first utility in North America to offer this kind of RNG program to its customers, and now more than 9,500 customers have signed up. FortisBC recognizes the potential of biofuels, particularly Renewable Natural Gas (RNG), in its system. RNG, derived from methane captured at landfills and farms, can effectively heat homes and businesses. Although FortisBC initiated efforts to encourage local municipalities and Regional Districts to tap into curbside waste byproduct methane for RNG production, progress has been slow, with Campbell River being a notable exception. Municipalities should consider these circular economy opportunities as alternatives to grant reliance.

One striking example involves three dairy farmers in the Comox Regional District, aiming to convert cattle manure into RNG and profit from energy supply while reducing odorous emissions. However, their application was denied by the CVRD.

Currently, our power comes from an energy grid that is like a bank. The energy to the grid is supplied from multiple sources, where we import 22%, much of which is supplied by coal plants in the U.S. So the "water powered" labels on your electric car charging stations are not completely accurate.

FortisBC has committed to meeting its 2030 goals, primarily by expanding the use of LNG and renewable natural gas, provided local municipalities cooperate.

It's essential to remember that local councils cannot curtail citizens' right to choose, as per the Community Charter. In times of financial strain, everyone should have choices that impact their finances.

FortisBC is a valuable resource for clarifying misconceptions about natural gas. Citizens are encouraged to engage with them and express their concerns to local governments, especially in light of the active lobby against natural gas.

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THE END OF MANY ERAS



Photo: York st. Diner - Google Images

We saw many small businesses shut down after the strain of mandates, it seems that trend is not slowing down.

On October 28th the community will see the beloved York St. Diner close its doors. After 12 years of serving satisfied customers, multiple factors have become too overwhelming to overcome for the owners of this much-loved establishment.

In speaking with Corrina, the manager of York St.Diner, it became apparent that small businesses, especially the food industry, are up against a 'death by a thousand cuts' situation. Corrina mentioned multiple reasons for their closure, and the fact that they made it through horribly restrictive mandates during COVID-19, only to meet this end, was even more upsetting to the staff, manager, and owner.

York St. Diner had tried multiple angles to bring in more revenue. One plan was to open at night for dinner, but no one wanted to come to the area at night, which was what we also heard from Kim Wa's staff, as the Province's 'safe injection' site's 'customers' had begun to multiply by the month and cause an unsafe atmosphere in the immediate location.

York St. Diner tried veggie bowls until they couldn't afford the broccoli and cauliflower because of the increase in vegetable prices from ever-increasing carbon taxes.

In April of 2021 B.C. was hit with a 7 % soda tax, which drove up the pricing on a glass of pop, causing just another reason to "not go out", or to not order pop with you meal, which used to be one of the commodities with a high margin of profit for restaurants as is the case with liquor. York St. also holds a liquor license and, as many consumers and facilities that serve liquor know, On April 1, 2023, the federal government in Canada increased the taxes on beer, wine, and spirits by 6.3% due to an annual escalator excise tax implemented in 2017.

The escalator tax allows the government to automatically raise taxes on alcohol in response to inflation. Canada's inflation rate hit a 39-year high in June 2022.2 From 2017 to 2019, federal beer taxes went up $34 million for large brewers in Canada while going down $31 million south of the border. Canadians are facing a sky-high tax hike of 6.3% in 2023, which is the largest year-over-year increase in 40 years. Canadian beer taxes are about 45% higher than other G7 countries on average.

When the minimum wage increase happened, not only did York St. have to pay the minimum wage earners more, but they obviously had to bump senior staff up to be fair to them. These are the same 16 staff that now will be without a job come the end of October.

As we say goodbye to Romeos, Kim Wah, and York St, and while we watch ground being broken for a Popeyes and other chain restaurants across the road, dare we ask : 'Why does it feel that there is a war on small businesses since 2020? Why are our local governments that preach about circular economies and supporting small businesses not fighting back for their citizen's owned businesses?'

A Richards



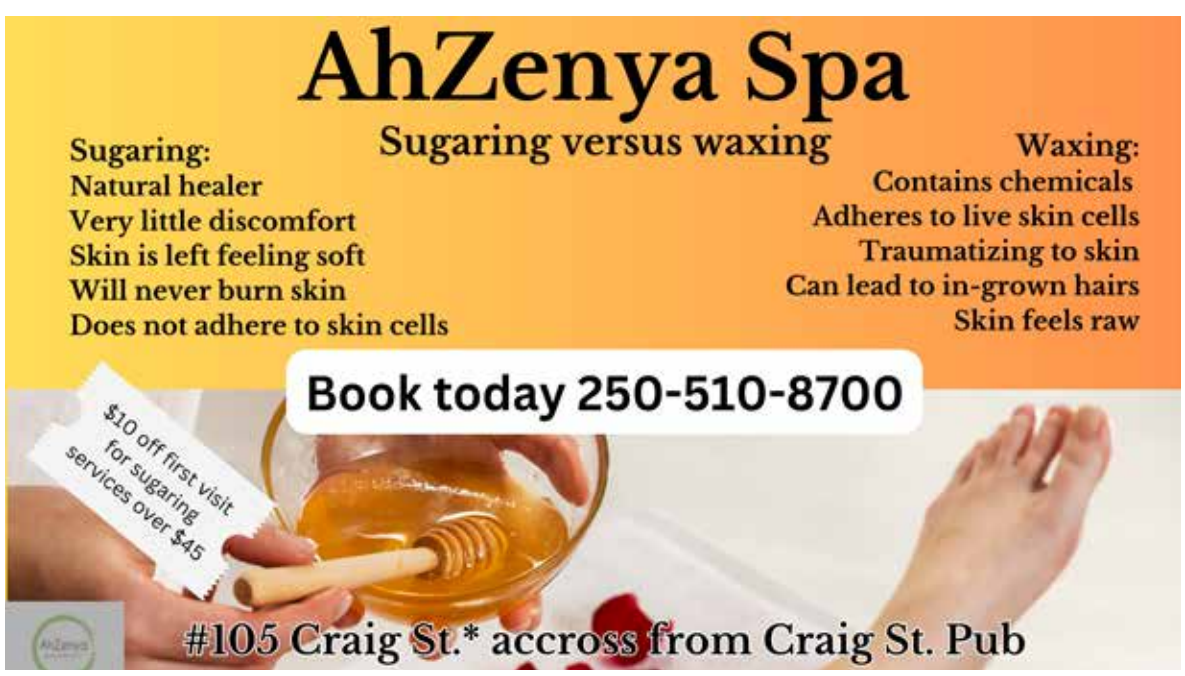
Photo: Dutch Farmers protest regulations on nitrogen emissions - www.agriland.ie

COUNTRY IN DISTRESS

Did you know there's still a Boer War going on?
No, I'm not talking about the war that took place more than 120 years ago in South Africa.
I'm talking about the global war against the farmers, playing out in countries like the Netherlands.
It's a war where governments and animal rights activists, such as Greenpeace and Wakker Dier, fight against the farmers. But...
The farmers are fighting back.
Last year, the Dutch farmers drove en masse the highways with their tractors (the Canadian truckers were their example), blocked supermarket distribution centres and stood on doorsteps of politicians to protest the halving of their livestock numbers. It was not just the farmers protesting, but also the fishermen and greenhouse owners.
The reason for the protests is the nitrogen plans of the Dutch government. It wants to significantly reduce nitrogen emissions and close 3000 farms.
The government and animal activists want to give the land back to nature. This will affect hundreds of thousands of people who are working in the farming/fishery/greenhouse industry, including transport and distribution.
The Netherlands is the second largest food exporter in the world.
The government plans are causing great distress. The majority of the people in the Netherlands support the farmers and many fly the Dutch flag upside down. In history when a ship at sea had an emergency situation, they turned the flag upside down to show crew members from nearby ships they needed help.
Many farmers, especially in the south and east of the Netherlands where there are many nature reserves, have to halve their livestock numbers to comply with environmental regulations.
According to the proposed nitrogen policy, farmers close to nitrogen-sensitive nature reserves should even quit completely.
These are businesses that have been in families for generations.
The government threatens to expropriate dairy farms if they do not want to cooperate in the buyout. The farmers are very upset for several reasons. There is great doubt, for example, whether nature really suffers so much from nitrogen. They also doubt that farmers are responsible for 40% of nitrogen emissions. The standards the Netherlands uses for the amount of nitrogen a nature reserve can handle, are already many times stricter than in all other European countries. The standards are so strict that even if all farmers disappear from the Netherlands, they will still not be met.
Although the agricultural sector has already made many proposals to achieve nitrogen reduction, the government, animal rights and climate change activists are still not satisfied. There is little space for technical innovations, while this is allowed in industry, aviation and traffic. As a result, farmers feel as though they are not taken seriously and are being treated unequally. This war has been going on for years now.
The effect of the unrest and uncertainty, caused by a lack of willingness from the government to reasonably discuss the future, has caused the suicide rate among Dutch farmers to grow to alarming heights. In the meantime, more and more citizens join the protests. They believe the Dutch government does not listen to the people on other fronts as well. The people suspect a double agenda (think World Economic Forum), in which the government is not out to improve nature, but is out to acquire cheap farmland for housing. They fear all of the Netherlands will be filled with cities, roads and parks full of windmills and solar panels and that there will be hardly any space left for food production.
Political opposition parties are fiercely opposed to government policies. They mainly describe the nitrogen problem as a paper problem. While hard clashes were taking place last year between police and farmer protesters in various places, the government wanted to deploy a mediator who should calm things down a bit.
The Dutch people had another idea. A new political party, the BBB (BoerBurgerBeweging/ FarmerCitizenMovement) was formed. Many people voted for this new party. While there were 16 parties to vote for in the spring of 2023, the BBB got 16 seats (from the 75) in parliament. They received 20% of all the votes. Other parties opposing the government are e.g. PVV (Partij voor de Vrijheid) from Geert Wilders (4 seats) and FVD (Forum voor Democratie) from Thierry Baudet (2 seats).
The process to come to an Agricultural Agreement (Landbouwakkoord) with LTO (Land- en Tuinbouworganisatie) was stopped on June 21, 2023.
The LTO didn't want to discuss the problems anymore and the other political parties thought it wasn't fair to discuss the problems further without the largest agricultural organization.
With the fall of the cabinet in July and Prime Minister Mark Rutte stepping down, the CO2 policy still will be a headache dossier, but Agenda 2030 seems off the table. The next elections will be on November 22, 2023. Like in the last elections, there's a need for lots of volunteers to check if the counting was done right. Last time it made a difference.
As the Dutch farmers were encouraged by the Canadian truckers, and even carried the Canadian flag on their tractors, we should be encouraged by the farmers in the Netherlands. They proved that unity will make a difference. Don't think what's going on in the Netherlands will not happen in Canada. The same WEF plans the government in the Netherlands is trying to implement, will be implemented here if we don't stand up against them.
Nettie Leeflang holds a Dutch passport.



Photo: Canadian farmers protest in support of Dutch farmers - Credit Getty Images



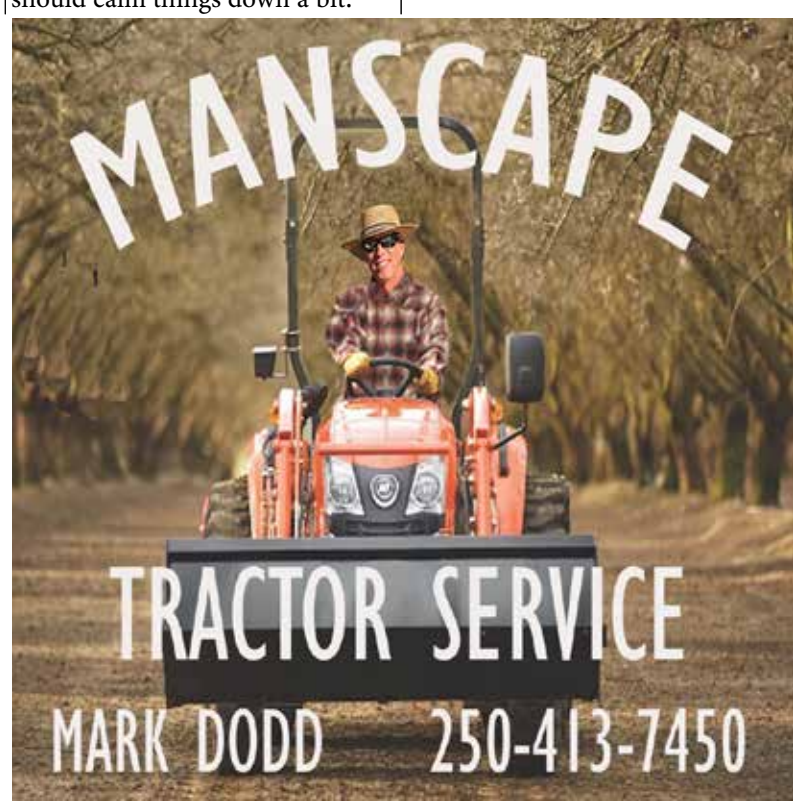
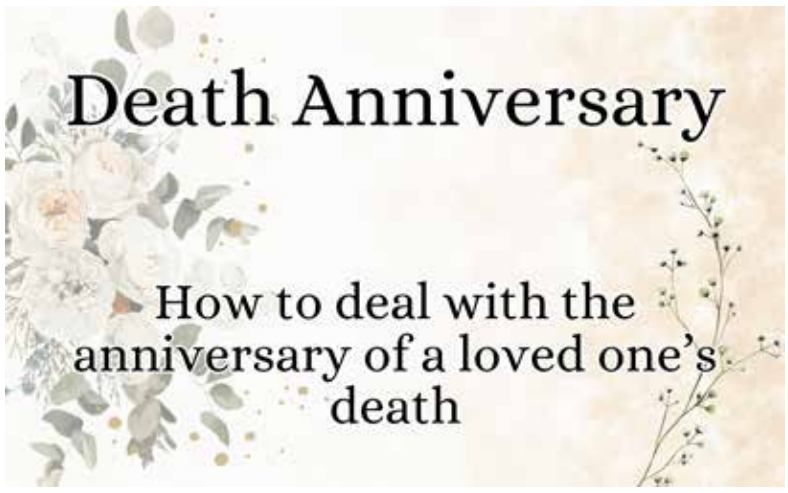




Photo: CVRD building - WWIND file photo

Westward Independent attended the Agricultural Town Hall hosted by the CVRD at the Cobble Hill Farmers Institute on Sept. 26th.
Initially, the hall was sparsely populated, possibly due to its midday timing during a farmer's workday from 1-4. However, it gradually filled up, with attendees comprising both farmers and concerned residents.
The event was expected to focus on the initial draft of the Agricultural Plan presented to the CVRD by UPLand Consulting, as suggested by the link found in the Plan Your Cowichan section. Unfortunately, the presentations did not touch on any aspect of this plan.
The presentations included a representative from the Agricultural Land Commission discussing its history and jurisdiction, followed by a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture who also discussed their jurisdiction. The final presenter initially assumed to be from the CVRD but later revealed to be from UPLand Consulting, wrapped up the event. The recurring theme was the District's jurisdiction through bylaws, which aligned with the Agricultural Plan's emphasis on more bylaws and bureaucracy. Notably absent was the Ministry of Forests, which has caused frustration among farmers by restricting their access to water.
The tensions grew in the room as the presentations wore on and farmers were not being presented with any of the "plan" but more so a who's who of bureaucracy that most farmers are well aware of. Many great questions were asked of the panel. One frustrated farmer spoke on how she can't get answers, as every level of government has different interpretations of rules and regulations, and how she is passed around in circles constantly as she and her husband try to follow the rules. Another older farmer at the back was given the microphone and he instantly teared up and said he didn't think there would be farms for his grandchildren. Another gentleman spoke on the flooding of the estuary, and the 70 hectares of farmland that will be lost. The representative from the ALC said that they would have to apply to do that and had not at this point, after which the representative from The Ministry of Agriculture stated, almost bewildered, that he had not even heard about this plan until a week or two ago, and presented as shocked.
When asked why the Agricultural Plan, which farmers were supposed to be consulted on, was not covered in the presentations, there was initially a denial of its existence. This led to confusion between the UpLand representative and the CVRD. When the possibility of breakout groups to discuss the plan was raised, attendees expressed there was no plan they had been presented with TO discuss. 'Breakout' groups are part of the Delphi Technique where representatives write down thoughts and concerns to give the impression of public consultation. One of the more humourful moments arose when some man from an unknown agency jumped up to the front and with a big grin stated the water restrictions of forage crops were "over!", to which he was met with laughs and moans, as any farmer of these crops knows, it is long past time to be able to make up for their third or fourth crop this year. And as one farmer noted, there was hardly any rain at all to make any difference, "I think they are playing games with us".
In summary, attendees left the Town Hall with more questions than answers and a sense of impending bureaucracy and red tape, which could hinder their ability to farm in the future.

For a breakdown of the more concerning plan you can watch a Town Hall COAP presented specifically on the more worrisome parts at www.coap.ca



Sometimes there are no words to express our emotions that would remind us of our loved ones in heaven during every single holiday, birthday, or anniversary. But in divine time, as we heal forward, the pattern of words would start to appear as simple as feeling the motion of EMBRACING the moment of the now, ACKNOWLEDGING the memories they have had with you and the life they've had known, and LOVE unconditionally without judgment. Just breathe all these three components (Embrace, Acknowledge, and Love) as you go through the anniversary of your loved one's death.

IDEAS on HOW to DEAL with Anniversary of a Loved One's Death:

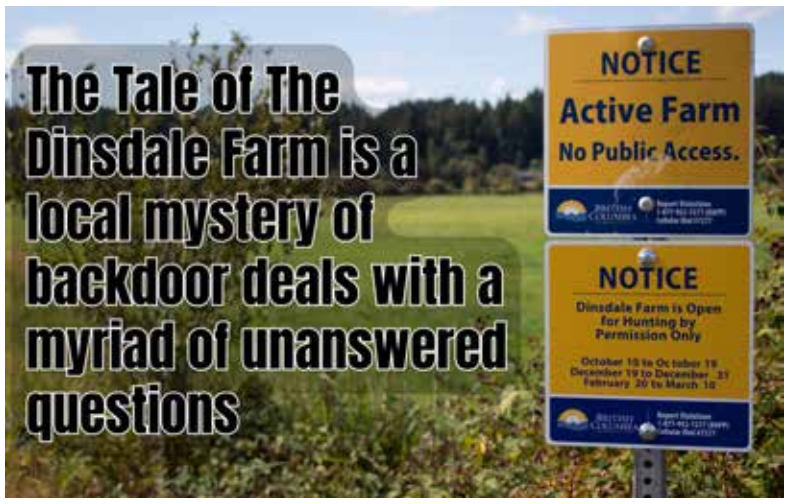
Here is a simple list I have compiled for you to get started on how to honour the anniversary of a loved one's death:

1. Look at old photos and make a keepsake box of things that would remind you of your loved one. Embrace the feelings and emotions it brings. It is okay to cry and express the full emotions as it is part of healing forward. Keep the memory alive.
2. Make a private ritual ceremony in your own home i.e. Light a candle in honour of your loved ones and say a prayer with a photo of him/her.
3. Donate a time to volunteer that would give honour to the memory that is close to your loved one's heart. (As for me and as a mother, I volunteer some of my time to be part of the Branch Committee at the 100 Admiral Mainguy Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corp in Maple Bay Vancouver Island BC, where my late son Donivin used to go as a Master Seaman/Cadet during his short time on earth.)
4. Search and focus your mind and heart for meaningful gratitude and joy every day
5. Take flowers and visit the memorial site, or visit their favorite places to go (go visit memory lane as you heal forward)
6. Plant a tree that would remind you of your loved one.
7. Finish the project that your loved ones always wanted to do with you. 8. Acknowledge, honour, and celebrate the strengths that you and your family have cultivated when you lost your loved one.
9. Write a journal or a blog about your loved one. This way it helps release the energy flow of healing within you and through you. It also gives others encouragement and permission to not give up while they grieve too.
10. Keep sharing the story of your loved ones and the message of strength that you have cultivated from the experience that you never thought you could be and do. You can either share it in the form of a blog, write a book about it, or share a testimony at a workshop or church. This is a healthy way to heal when you learn to honour and talk about the life that he/she has known and the lessons it entails.

Written by Grace Alfafara
Certified Transformational Life Coach, Sophrologist, Grief and Nutritional Psychology Advocate, Brainz Magazine Executive Contributor, Human Rights Consultant, Published Author, Wellness Speaker

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The Tale of The Dinsdale Farm is a local mystery of backdoor deals with a myriad of unanswered questions

In the heart of Cowichan Bay, amidst the lush farmland and tranquil landscapes, a storm of controversy was brewing. Whispers and rumours swept through the community like wildfire, all centred on the contentious flooding of 70 hectares of precious farmland. As the community watched, a cadre of self-proclaimed "journalists" emerged, eager to serve as the arbiters of truth. But, in their quest for answers, they found themselves knocking on the door of the very source responsible for the flooding, akin to entrusting a wolf with the care of the henhouse. In so doing, their naivety led them to be swayed to side with Multi-million dollar NGOs and the government instead of their fellow residents and local farmers.

Among these curious minds, Westward Independent stood out, steadfast in its commitment to uncovering the hidden facets of this unfolding saga. Through a network of invaluable connections, they delved into a shadowy nexus of dealings between the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), multiple ministries, Ducks Unlimited, and the Nature Trust. The turmoil erupted in June when a sudden public media release catapulted a contentious issue into the limelight, sending shockwaves through residents near and far. The announcement declared the impending submersion of 70 hectares of vital farmland in Cowichan Bay Estuary, purportedly to counteract the rising sea levels, establish a carbon capture initiative, and vaguely reference benefits to salmon.* A tempest of questions swept through the community: How could such a monumental decision be made without consulting those directly affected? Who authorized this audacious undertaking? Amidst this climate of uncertainty, a rigorous investigation unfolded. Freedom of Information requests were swiftly submitted, legal experts were enlisted, and out of this turmoil, the grassroots organization known as Land Keepers emerged.

As time moved on, a cascade of revelations started to emerge, many of them deeply unsettling. It came to light that even the Area Directors, including the one from Cowichan Bay, had been kept in the dark about the impending farmland submersion. Then, a member of the original farm's family stepped forward, shedding light on the property's sale to Nature Trust and Ducks Unlimited.

The son of the Dinsdale farm's original owners recounted a poignant tale of hardship. When his father passed away, his mother was left burdened with numerous cattle, a vast farm, and the responsibility of caring for their children. As the farm's dikes deteriorated, this would cause flooding of the farm with sea water(salt water) destroying the farm forever; she sought the province's aid in repairing them. Shockingly, the province refused and insisted that the Dinsdales foot the entire bill. Serendipitously, the Dinsdales had a familial connection to the Province's head of dikes, who deemed the demand absurd. Eventually, the province agreed to cover two-thirds of the repair costs, but by then, the single mother couldn't muster the remaining third.

Faced with dire circumstances, the dike people and province suggested that if the Dinsdale turn over this land they would fix the dikes. The family reluctantly decided to turn over these very productive farm fields next to Westcan Road access to the Westcan Docks in Cowichan Bay to the BC Provincial Government in lieu of paying for the one-third of the cost of dikes to be repaired on the existing 70 hectares of farmland known as the Dinsdale Farm. Westward Independent obtained a crucial addendum attached to the sale contract, which stated that the purchaser guaranteed the existing dyke system's integrity for 50 years, beginning in 1990, and pledged not to allow any uncontrolled flooding that would harm adjacent properties.

"1. The purchaser warrants that the existing dyking scheme around the perimeter of the property will not be materially altered or breached to allow uncontrolled flooding of the lands. This warranty to remain in effect for the term of 50 years commencing December 15, 1990 and running until December 15, 2040"

"3. The Purchaser accepts the responsibility to take all necessary precautions concerning the existing dyking scheme - not to allow any flooding that will be liable cause any damage or will interfere with the enjoyment of any adjacent property and in particular the property of the Vendor. The purchaser acknowledges that any saltwater flooding will destroy the land for agricultural use."

The Agricultural Land Commission was roped into the inquiry. When asked if an application had been submitted to flood the farmland, the Chief Executive Officer responded with an email indicating that a consultant for Nature Trust had inquired about the process, but no such application had been submitted.

The story grew more tangled as Freedom of Information Requests languished unanswered, except for one from North Cowichan, which initially disavowed any involvement in the decision. Later, it came to light that North Cowichan was indeed part of the decision through a connected vote. Even long-serving councillors professed ignorance when questioned about their knowledge of the decision, leaving this aspect of the story shrouded in mystery.

A summary report shows that once NTBC & Duck Unlimited bought the property from Ann Dinsdale, they then leased it to the B.C. Government for 99 years with all the conditions of the sale and summary report, that state the farm is to be a farm until 2040, along with the maintenance of the dikes and to preserve trees and wildflowers.

Numerous questions lingered unanswered in the wake of this controversy. Would the saltwater flooding impact nearby wells? Who were the key figures behind Nature Trust's momentous decision? Will the flood zone of nearby properties increase? And why had there been such a glaring lack of public consultation?

The story was far from over, and Westward Independent pledged to continue its investigative journey. Stay tuned for updates on our website, coap.ca, and in future editions of the newspaper as this highly controversial tale continues to unfurl, revealing its enigmatic layers.



Dinsdale Farm, area in question, Cowichan Bay. WWIND file photo

Conservative leader John Rustad questions the Minister of Agriculture and Food, Alexis Pam, regarding the destruction of farmland during Question Period.

J. Rustad: Today in the Cowichan Valley, the NDP is scheduled to destroy over 100 acres of the Dinsdale Farmland, taking it out of British Columbia's agricultural land reserve to create a marsh. This excellent quality productive agricultural land that is currently used to grow food for people here in British Columbia. To the NDP premier: why are you so eager to take land out of the agricultural land out of the agricultural land reserve to create a marsh, while refusing to repurpose underutilized ALR land for more housing for everyday British Columbians who are facing a housing crisis so profound that it is driving working people into homelessness?

Hon. P. Alexis: Farmland is precious to all of us in British Columbia. I am not familiar with this particular case but would like the member... Excuse me? I have the floor.

I would like the member to reach out to me after this session, and we can discuss this fully. I can tell you that we all need and appreciate agricultural land. Yes, there is pressure on agricultural land reserves everywhere in British Columbia for a number of reasons, growing being one of them. I would like to take this if I could, Sir, after the session.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of the Fourth Party, supplemental.

J. Rustad: The minister has actually responded to the people on the issue on this and said that the land will be repurposed. I find it disturbing that there is a letter that came from the minister's office and the minister was not aware of what was going on with that file. The reality was that there was actually a contract in place on this land when it was transferred to Nature Trust, and that contract says: "The purchaser warrants that the existing diking scheme around the perimeter of the property will not be materially altered or breached to allow uncontrolled flooding on the land. This warranty is to remain in effect for the term of 50 years, commencing Dec 15th, 1990, and running until December 15, 2040"

Not only has this government provided 1.5 million to the destruction of this property, but they're actually going to be breaching a contract that was in place for this heritage land that is so critical in terms of providing agricultural benefits. At a time when [people are struggling to put food on the table and struggling to find housing, why does this government think that destroying farmland is appropriate?

Hon. P. Alexis: I will take this question under notice.



Photo: Credit www.energystepcode.ca

Step Code changes for construction

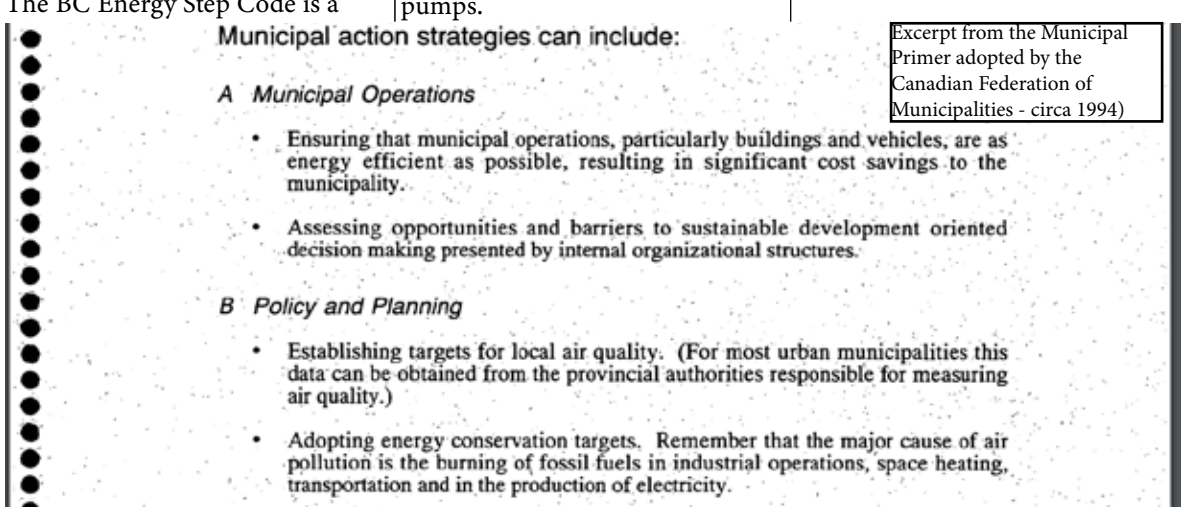
Recently North Cowichan voted to bring in Step Code 4 from the B.C. Building Step Code efficiency plan on their own volition even though it clearly states this on their website: "The BC Energy Step Code is a provincial regulation that local governments in British Columbia, Canada, may use, if they wish, to incentivize or require a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes above and beyond the requirements of the base building code." North Cowichan will be aligning the Building Bylaw to reflect provincial Step Code requirements for space and water heating in buildings. As of May 1, 2023, the province requires all new residential and commercial buildings to demonstrate compliance with the BC Energy Step Code:
Step 3 for Part 9 buildings (single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes)
Step 2 for Part 3 buildings (larger apartment buildings, commercial, mixed-use, office)
North Cowichan is adopting Zero Emission Step Code EL-3, as per the new Building Bylaw which was amended in October, with EL-4 effective July 1, 2024. North Cowichan turned down the motion brought forth by Councillor Findlay to engage with the building industry before they voted this acceleration program in.
North Cowichan is progressing to the highest steps to reach its carbon emissions goal of 80% reduction of emissions. Already, more than half of new homes built in North Cowichan use electric energy for space and water heating.
The BC Energy Step Code is a provincial set of standards for constructing energy-efficient and airtight buildings. These compliance standards ensure that the province will be Net-Zero energy-ready by 2032. To reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with space and water heating in buildings, the Province has developed the Zero Carbon Step Code.

21. Do the climate action plan(s) and priorities of your local government or Modern Treaty Nation align with the climate action plans and priorities of senior levels of government?	"Yes, we align climate action plan(s) and priorities with the federal 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan","Yes, we align climate act plan(s) and priorities with the provincial CleanBC Roadmap to 2030","Yes, we assess our plans and priorities for multilevel alignment","Yes, we collaborate with other communities to align climate action plans and priorities of senior levels of government"

Excerpt from the North Cowichan Climate Action & Energy Plan

With a full house at the Oct 4th Council meeting, all but one speaker was against this acceleration bylaw put forth by the council, but they were all dismissed. Councillor Justice reiterated that Natural Gas can still be used in step three and indicated it was not a "ban", however without consulting with developers, the lack of understanding may have played a part when not realizing that Fortis will not bring gas to a building as a secondary source of heating as that does not make economical sense for their company. It is functionally and practically a ban as eliminating gas as an option for primary heating or any meaningful load will make it cost-preclusive for developers to include a system in new developments or attachments for single homes. Councillor Istace tried to dismiss all the speakers who were worried about cancelling all Natural Gas by saying this was not a retroactive bylaw. While he is correct, the Climate Action Plan states that old houses should be renovated to meet certain standards and at the end of the life of gas furnaces, they should be replaced with heat pumps.

And if climate action is really a priority what is North Cowichan prepared to do about the methane associated with their waste? They will not turn our yardside waste into Renewable Natural Gas so that FortisBC can buy it and make it available to heat homes or businesses. What about wastewater treatment? Garbage? If new homes are responsible for lowering already low emissions, should they not be responsible for responsibly managing organic waste? a source of methane. Or if they are making homes responsible for emissions, but not transportation, which is a much higher emitter, are they supporting Compressed Natural Gas for diesel fleet vehicles? Or signing the letter from Fortis to the BC Utilities Commission asking that all new builds consist of Renewable Natural Gas?
It raises questions that this push to accelerate the building step code well before the Province implements these regulations comes on the heels of the Councillors attending the Union of B.C. Municipalities annual meeting in Vancouver. Union of BC Municipalities Megan Lohmann, Head, Community Energy Management, Community Energy Association Maxwell Sykes, Climate and Energy Manager, City of Surrey are all on the energy step code 'Council'. From the Website: "As an advisory body, the Council does not have any formal regulatory or administrative authority. Instead, it provides a venue for stakeholders to gather and share information, and work collaboratively to resolve issues as they arise. Informally, it serves as a "bridge" between the provincial government, utilities, local governments, and the building, development and design sectors, to help local governments adopt the BC Energy Step Code in a prudent and coordinated manner."
So a "bridge" between bigger government and smaller. Does your voice even matter these days?


Municipal action strategies can include:

A *Municipal Operations*

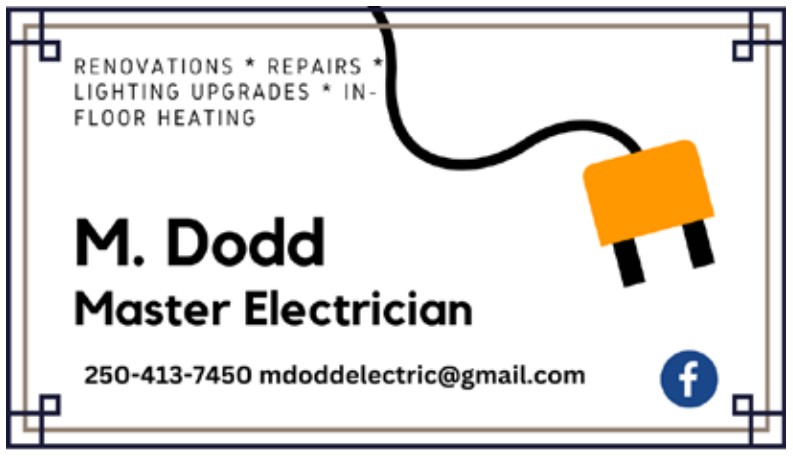
- Ensuring that municipal operations, particularly buildings and vehicles, are as energy efficient as possible, resulting in significant cost savings to the municipality.
- Assessing opportunities and barriers to sustainable development oriented decision making presented by internal organizational structures.

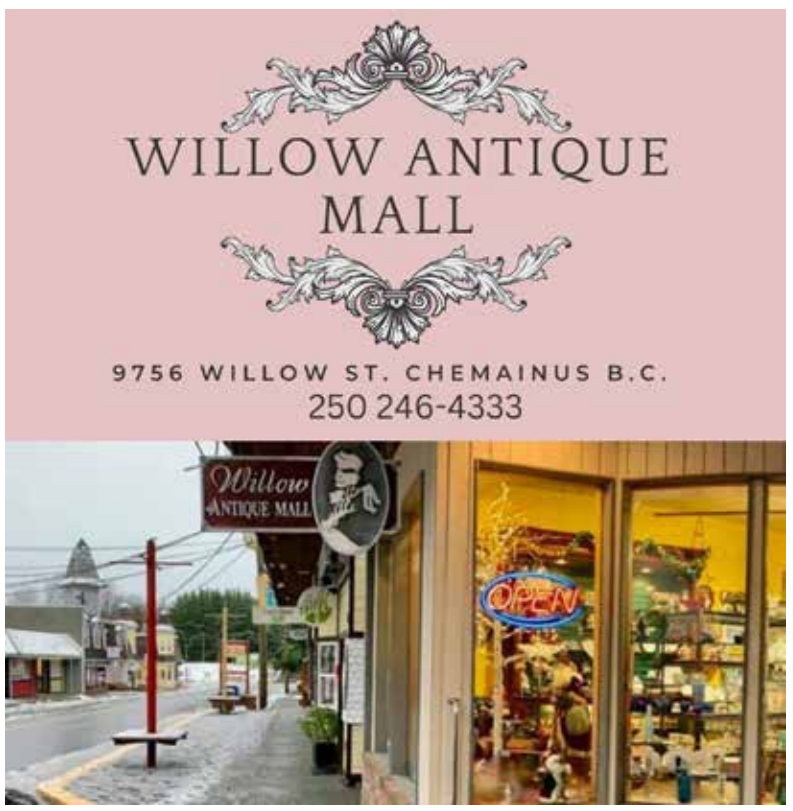
B *Policy and Planning*

- Establishing targets for local air quality. (For most urban municipalities this data can be obtained from the provincial authorities responsible for measuring air quality.)
- Adopting energy conservation targets. Remember that the major cause of air pollution is the burning of fossil fuels in industrial operations, space heating, transportation and in the production of electricity.

Excerpt from the Municipal Primer adopted by the Canadian Federation of Municipalities - circa 1994)











Wednesday, September 20th, I was there.

And I had my 10-year-old daughter with me.
The peaceful protest, in support of children and parental rights, was a shit show.
Let it be known that the VicPD are the ones who demanded the organizers shut down the event or they would be pulling their support.
It was getting dangerous.
There were a lot of moving parts, and the Antifa-looking activists filed off a bus and walked to the legislative grounds around noon, were sent there to do their job of causing alarm, division, distress and violence if needed.
The police did little to keep things under control and de-escalate, and when it had clearly gone too far, they decided WE had to pack it in.
The aggressors were validated in their behaviour and the peaceful, lawful protest was shut down.
The POLICE unplugged the mic, they ended it.
The island was united in a message yesterday but divided by distance.
With a hot-button issue like the gender ideologies being pushed in our schools and on our youth, and the heavily funded and supported unions and activists, we cannot afford to be separated by towns/cities.
In Victoria, we were outnumbered 3:1 (so I'm told), with more arriving nearing the end of the day.
Those of us who did show up, were vulnerable and at risk that afternoon in Victoria.
Although I was never truly "afraid", I know many who were and others who were traumatized by this event. Including people from the trans/ally community.
What I witnessed was distressing and heartbreaking.
If we DO NOT band together now, show up and be visible and brave, I don't know what people think they will have to face it in 1-3 years from now. Our communities, our youth, are crumbling.
For those of us who did show up, I am PROUD to have been amongst the majority of you, who held the line in love and peace.
The aggression and hatred were spewing out of the vast majority of the counter-protesters, and we did not sink to that level (at least not from what I witnessed).
The whole time I was standing there facing the crowd, showing a heart with my hand, my daughter standing beside me doing the same, all I felt was genuine sadness for the individuals that were screaming, swearing and signalling violent gestures towards myself and others.
It was hard to watch, especially the youth who were so distraught and full of hate (ironically holding signs that said "love wins" or "no room for hate")
What's that phrase? ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS
We saw what happened at the legislature grounds, first hand. It was hard to ignore the hate and anger coming so viciously from the counter-protest side, and not notice the resolve and calmer, more loving gestures from the protesters who showed up for parental rights, children and their families.
Shame on the members of the LGBTQ and ally community that continue to push that narrative and REFUSE to listen to the actual reasons and concerns of the people attempting to protest peacefully. You are hurting your own people and dividing our communities.
Yesterday cannot happen again, but I imagine it will.
Unfortunately, this topic is incredibly divisive and heavily funded. Yet, this issue will not be bullied away. Parents have drawn the line with their children, and their voices will only continue to grow and get louder until true dialogue and reason are brought to the table.

Savanah Wright

Last Sunday my family's life changed dramatically.

We were the target of a hate crime. My home was attacked, my property destroyed and my wife and children now live in fear that someone wishes them harm. This is not some faraway place, it happened right here in North Cowichan.
I believe in free speech, and parents' right to choose what they teach their children, I have Canadian flags and signs out the front of my house presenting my views. I have a 4'x8' sign on my little utility trailer that reads:

SEXUAL 1
ORIENTATION 2
GOVERNMENT 3
INDOCTRINATION

I drag it down to the legislature lawn many a Saturday and spend a few hours talking to anyone who will listen about what "SOGI123" is and why I object to it being taught to children. I have had this and other messages on my sign since the original Freedom Convoys, proudly on display on my trailer out the front of my house for years. It gets a lot of attention, from both supporters and detractors of my messages. But never, until now has it felt dangerous. Most Canadians, whether they agree or not with my message will talk to me about it. I frequently have great discussions in my driveway with people who both love and hate my perspective. It has in my mind until now been a beautiful example of Canadian democracy at work. We can agree to disagree and live and let live.
That all changed Sunday night. Saturday afternoon I noticed an older blue F150 idling at the top of my driveway, a middle-aged woman looking at my sign and furiously texting. I approached her, as I do whenever anyone stops to read my sign and try and start a conversation. Usually, people talk, about whether they are pro or against my sign, they always say so. Not this day, it was different, this woman on seeing my attempts to engage in discussion instead looked calmly away as though she had never seen me, and quietly drove off like she had not even been there. It was such a strange response, so unlike any other I have seen over the last 2 or more years, it disturbed me at the time, but I couldn't put my finger on why.
I determined I would not worry my wife with it, and got on with my day.
That night someone destroyed my signs, damaged my trailer, and pushed my Canadian flags into the dirt. This was no casual passerby seeing the sign and not liking it. I have seen that before and I know what it looks like. I accept it as a consequence of publicly speaking my mind. This was different.
The violence and aggression of the attack are frightening. A great deal of effort was spent to destroy what I had built. The message is clear. We will hurt you if you keep expressing your views.
The intention to intimidate and frighten us is hard to refute, this was a very thinly veiled threat of violence against anyone not adopting the SOGI123 agenda.
A police report was made, lip service paid to an investigation was paid, and I was told that "if" the investigating officer thought it worth following up she would be in contact. A work week later and I have heard nothing. I can only assume that to the RCMP this kind of violence is acceptable when it is directed at a tax-paying white male with a job.
I have a question for the RCMP and the mainstream media:
"Would the response have been different if I was one of the celebrated minorities instead of a "fringe minority?" If I were a purple-haired trans activist, or if my sign said "Support Trans Babies" would this be splashed across every TV screen from Victoria to Fredericton".
The RCMP seem entirely disinterested in finding out who did this, so now we feel we are on our own, we need to take matters into our own hands to provide security for my family. I have spent my life not locking my doors, trusting the good nature of the majority. That is what life in Canada meant for most of the 24 years I have lived here, sadly this is not the Canada I emigrated to. If you had told me in 1999 when I landed in Canada that 25 years later I would live in fear of violent thugs I would not have believed you. Yet here we are, 2023 and my wife and I now live in fear of violence by hate-filled activists, all because we dared to express an opinion that differs from the extreme leftists who control the government and schools.

What has happened to Canada?

Paul

I feel it necessary to write about the protest/counter-protest protest, on Sept. 20th.

If you believe other news reports that called the protestors unruly, aggressive or violent, know that the reporter is confused, as this was not the case in ANY of the rallies.
I challenge every island newspaper to print this.
In every case, it was the government-paid counter-protestors causing problems. I have personally spoken with people from Parksville, Victoria, and Vancouver who all concurred.
I can personally share our experience in Nanaimo.
There were about 150 protestors, happy, smiling, multicultural and lovingly spreading these messages: to protect kids, with these signs: "Leave Kids Alone" and "Let Kids Be Kids".
to give parents, not the government, the right to decide what sex education is appropriate at what age for their own children.
The counter-protesters consisted of an equal or larger number of people. They seemed more as they shouted their angry, loud message "No Space for Hate", and "Trans Lives Matter" continuously.
The protest group quietly and respectfully left the space they had booked, as the counter-protestors took it over. As the counter-protesters rant became louder and angrier, the peaceful protesters moved to another location in Mateo Sutton Park. The anti-protesters followed, continuing their aggressive hate message.
The peaceful protesters moved a third time and got to share ideas and actions as to how parents can protect their children, and grandchildren from unguided and inappropriate sexual programming for ALL children, no matter their gender. Absolutely NO mention of bullying children, discriminating against LGBTQ2S+, or hate, which are the inverted messages the anti-protesters continued to shout about and act out.
The saddest part is that most of the anti-protestors were government union employees: CUPE, PSAC, and Teachers Federation. Were we, the taxpayers, paying for them to all be there? I doubt they took a day off with no pay, so unfortunately this must be the truth. Maybe they even got time and a half to participate?
Despite the ongoing harassment by counter-protestors, those there on behalf of ALL children no matter their gender, refused to engage and the counter-protestors left for their lunch hour, and to return to their government jobs.
Most parents, whether male, female or LGBTQ2S+, want what is best for their children. Everyone, all races, all religions, all colours.
In Canada, children cannot drive until they are 16. They cannot legally drink or vote until they are 18. These rules have been agreed upon by Canadians as safeguards until children mature.
Yet the anti-protestors think government-controlled educators

should have the right to decide for children without parental input.
78% of Canadians believe parents should be informed if their children choose to change their gender identity or pronouns, (stats from June Angus Reid poll).
Who decides a child needs to have sexually explicit material provided in school and that a child should be allowed to make irreversible sexual changes without parental consent? Did YOU agree to this?
If you believe other news reports that called the protestors unruly, aggressive or violent, know that the reporter is either confused or intentionally lying, as this was not the case in ANY of the rallies. In every case, it was the government paid counter-protestors.
As a concerned grandparent, I am getting pretty tired of being called names by the people who preach and embody what they wrongfully call us: hateful, discriminatory, racist, homophobic, transphobic, Marxist, and misogynist, bullies.
It is very disheartening that this Canadian trend was started by our prime minister. He is not popular worldwide, it's time other Canadians stopped emulating him.

Lorene

My wife and I have been living in a trailer with an addition of my making for over 3 1/2 years.

We were set up on someone's private lands in a rural setting. We were hooked up properly to sepic and had power and water. We had a relationship that was beneficial to the landowner and ourselves.
We had a by-law enforcer show up on the property because a neighbour (who lives in a trailer himself, abides by no rules or regulations and lives in a hoarder's mess) made a complaint about 43 people in the neighbourhood living in tiny homes of their making (trailers, fifth wheels, Yurts) This ideological subversion of this man-made people homeless in this neighbourhood including myself and my wife.
There is a housing crisis in Canada and this municipality is pushing people out of trailers. We were told by the bylaw enforcer that these units do not meet building codes. (why do they sell these units in Canada?) He stated you can not sleep in these units on your property. We said people haul trailers all over and sleep in them while camping. We were told that parks and campsites are grey areas. What? There was no logic in what he was saying. Plus no one can make a complaint against the guy who started all this because in the by-law enforcers' words that would be vindictive. Many people are having a hard time finding housing here because many residents have converted traditional rentals into Airbnb accommodations. Many are being forced to live beyond their means with high rental costs.
During the lockdown nurses, doctors and other emergency workers could live in an RV but that doesn't matter now. The city of Duncan has small trailer units set up for street people on Trunk Road. This seems like hypocrisy.
The by-law enforcer's boss is the mayor. The mayor serves the corporation of The City of Duncan, Not We The People. The mayor could amend the by-laws so people can live in RVs and be allowed to rent them out to others to use.
There are people doing that already (Marketplace is full of ads)
Why are there rules for some? Is it because the municipality is not getting their cut?
The transients in this town get better treatment than working people, trying to get by.
We The People need help.

KWS

I went to the Legislature Buildings on Wednesday, September 20th, to listen to speakers for the 1MillionMarch4Children and Parent's Rights Rally.

As the presentations started, a very aggressive noisy group started to form in the center of the grounds shouting about LGBT rights and Teacher's Union beliefs.
This confrontational group moved in on the speakers, screaming and yelling and surrounding the podium. Police had to move in to hold them back and I could see the worry on their faces.
I watched as the Union LGBT activists surrounded a group of Muslim families screaming at these people at the top of their lungs "Go Home!" and "Go Back To Where You Came From!". I have never seen such overt racism displayed publicly in my life.
The tension was very high and it looked like this group of Union LGBT Activists were coming close to working themselves into violence. The speakers packed up their sound systems and left, surrounded by concerned police trying to protect them from these violent agitators.
Upon reflection, I remember seeing in the news our Prime Minister and many Federal and Provincial Politicians with long faces apologizing to the native communities for the terrible mistake their Colonial Forefathers made forcing the education of Colonist's beliefs and cultures onto native children without the consent of their parents.
Here on the eve of these apologies, I am witnessing our Prime Minister and many Federal and Provincial Politicians, the teacher's unions and the LBGT community forcing their beliefs and culture onto Canadian school children against and without the consent of their parents.
I write this letter not to downplay the tragedy of First Nation's children but to say we are again seeing elected officials in Canada thinking they know better than parents and forcing their beliefs and cultures onto schoolchildren and their families.
Don't make the same mistake twice by hurting family units and trampling on their cultures and beliefs.

Sincerely,
John Money
Duncan, BC

Question for the No Space for Hate people

Where were you in 2020 when BLM, a human rights group, protested and rioted throughout the US and Canada, while everyone else was under travel restrictions and various forms of lockdowns, 10% of the riots caused destruction, burned buildings and National flags and even occupied a large part of Seattle for several weeks under armed occupation? Police kicked out at gunpoint.
The riots even led to the deaths of 9 people in the US... Were you kneeling with them like Justin? You were silent because the media told you this was good.
Hate is hate.
Where were you in 2021 when they weaponized the media against unvaccinated people, saying they can't be trusted, they're selfish, wishing death upon them, encouraging them to be ostracized and shamed, banning them from society almost entirely, refusing them medical care to THIS DAY? All of which we now know to be completely unscientific speculative reporting..
"The unvaccinated do not believe in science, who are often misogynists, often racists, too; it is a sect, a small group, but who are taking up space, and here we have to make a choice, as a leader, as a country, how long do we tolerate these people" -Justin Trudeau on La semaine des 4 Julie, a popular Quebec talk show program You were silent because the media told you this was good.
Hate is hate.

Where were you in 2021 when 69 Canadian churches were vandalized or even burnt to the ground over speculative reporting from the media about the potential unmarked graves?
You were silent because the media told you this was good.
Hate is hate.
Where were you in 2022 when the freedom convoy, a human rights group, marched across this country, piled into Ottawa, honked their horns and had a dance party without violence, without burnt buildings and nobody died to stand up for their human rights?
The media calls them racist, extremists, white supremacists etc. You were chastising, mocking, scoffing, disowning and discrediting them because the media told you they were bad.
Hate is hate.
Now we are here in 2023, where the media is trying to say that parents are an extremist hate group, full of bigots for questioning why a belief system is being implemented in public schools. Politicians, unions, federations and districts are openly calling for people to "demoralize, insult and bully" parents for taking this guarded position with their children.
You support this because the media says it's good. Because hate is only hate when you're told it's projected towards you.
Hate is hate.

The only thing greater than your absolute hypocrisy is your complete ignorance of the fact that the media plays to your emotions and fears like a well-tuned fiddle.
"Journalistic Standards" right. I reject hate in all forms... no matter what I'm told by the strangers on TV.

Brian

ISLAND SEW CHECK
SEWING MACHINE SERVICE & SCISSOR SHARPENING
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TAMMY'S TIPS

Well gosh darn it, who can afford food these days, especially on a retirement budget?

When I see butter go from $3.50 in a couple of years to $7.99 I can not find enough ways to cut corners, but I will try and share what I have done.

Butter. My mother used to do this which gave me the idea. Butter has changed, if you have not noticed how it does not melt the same, I buy the purest unsalted butter I can and then cut ¼ of the block off, throw it in the blender, add salt and the least "tasty" olive oil to consistency preference. You end up with a smooth margarine-like consistency, and make your butter go further up to four times.

I did splurge ($110) and buy an electric grain grinder, and now purchase organic wheat kernels (10kg) for $59 from True Grain, which allows me to grind healthy fresh wheat for a fraction of the cost of buying flour in a store.

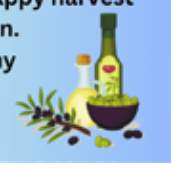
The Farm store is so amazing as they offer less-than-perfect produce for $1.00 a lb. I happily buy this produce as I am not fussy about how my produce looks ..it cooks up the same. Shame more Grocery stores did not do this! The Farm store is also bringing in more bulk to save consumers money. Thank you Farm Store!

With the growth of Thrift stores in popularity, the contents of these stores just get better and better. Thrift Town, Bibles for Missions, and Grace Life, to name a few, offer high-quality goods, and amazing sales to save even more pocket change when you need that new jacket for the winter.

Are you lucky enough to have an apple tree? An overabundance of kale? I often offer trades on local FaceBook pages of my excess produce for someone else's excess. My apples have become quite the trading commodity.

As more and more local, provincial, and federal taxes keep squeezing our pocketbooks, we need to look to innovative, old-school ways to save money! Send your ideas to contact@coap.ca and we can highlight them in our next edition.

Till next time, happy harvest season.
Tammy



North Cowichan Council, led by Councillors Istace, Toporowski, and Justice, with Mayor Douglas as the tie-breaker, rejected the tax exemption for The House of Grace pregnancy center.

While generously granting tax breaks to multimillion-dollar NGOs like Nature Trust and Ducks Unlimited, the council rejected a tax exemption for a small, community-minded group providing free support to women facing unexpected pregnancies in the Valley.

When the initial application was made cancel culture made its appearance. Two women, armed with speeches rife with lies and hyperbole, spoke against the House of Grace during the agenda discussion. A few letters to the council sealed the House of Grace's fate. However, amidst the chaos, Councillors Manhas, Caljouw, and Findlay went beyond hearsay; they visited the center and conducted their own research to uncover the truth.

This denial appeared to be an attack on faith-based programs.

In a curious coincidence, Camp Qwanoes, a community staple since the '70s, faced a similar fate in the same meeting. Counc. Findlay defended the camp against "mud-slinging," but Counc. Istace hinted that perhaps a little mud was deserved.

Why the initial denial? Rumours and false slander spread like wildfire, involving disinformation about Camp Qwanoes' stance on the LGBTQ+ community and hearsay that House of Grace opposes abortions.

The Council meeting on September 26th witnessed a packed room, with the majority supporting the House of Grace and Camp Quanoes. Both organizations had the chance to counter misinformation through separate delegations.

Camp Quanoes presented a compelling case that even changed Councillor. Caljouw's mind about the (anti) LGBTQ+ myth.

House of Grace followed suit with a heartfelt presentation detailing its services, from post-abortion counselling to support for women choosing to keep their babies.

They systematically debunked each piece of disinformation presented by the opposing women.

During the public speaking segment, supporters spoke for the camp, and two women repeated generalizations and misinformation about the House of Grace. COAP spoke on behalf of both organizations.

For those interested, the entire meeting is available on COAP's YouTube page via @coapinc or NorthCowichan.ca by viewing the September 26th minutes and agenda.

Camp Quanoes eventually regained its tax exemption, but the House of Grace fell short when Mayor Douglas cast the tie-breaking "nay" vote. It's disheartening that the four "nay" votes didn't take the time to explore this oasis for women, instead relying on hearsay.

Hopefully, the pendulum of cancel culture swings back soon, prompting those engaged in such behaviour to recognize the harm they inflict on fellow community members.



Stop Blaming Bacteria

Many readers may not know that pharmaceutical companies have practically abandoned antibiotic research. There has not been a new class of antibiotics discovered since the 1980's. It's difficult, takes many years to develop an antibiotic, costs approximately 1.5 billion dollars and bacteria begin developing resistance within a matter of hours.

Immediately upon exposure, bacteria begin generating intelligent responses. These include, but are not limited to: Protecting structures antibiotics target by physically altering them; Decreasing the amount of the drug that can reach targeted receptors by altering the rate of assimilation, keeping the drug below toxic thresholds; altering membrane permeability; pumping drugs right back out; creating resistant or alternate metabolic pathways that aren't susceptible to the antibiotic drugs; not metabolizing the drug, changing how it is metabolized or even learning to use it as food.

Once bacteria have learned these resistance mechanisms, they share that information freely and rapidly across all bacterial species. Essentially, they trade DNA and resistance information like kids trade Pokémon cards and adults share memes.

Bacteria can share this information directly or indirectly. Indirectly akin to leaving little presents of genetic knowledge for other bacteria to pick up and use if they need it.

Even more impressive, bacteria, when they detect a chemical is trying to kill them, seem to anticipate other drugs may be created. So, while they develop resistance to the current drug, they simultaneously develop resistance mechanisms to several other antibiotics we have not yet invented, that they have never yet encountered, some of which are structurally not even like the one they were initially exposed to.

In reality, we ourselves are more bacterial than human in our biology. The microbiome is the very fabric of biology and life on this planet. Our microbiome is what allows us to be alive and have the physical bodies we do.

It is responsible for ensuring the very protein structure of our gut lining is intact and functioning, that our cells can communicate and that our food is broken down and assimilated, to name only a few roles it plays.

As a society, we've been stuck in the "Germ Theory" paradigm for too long. Frankly, it's relevance has expired and with all of the new (and not so new) information being discovered it is time that we act like bacteria and respond intelligently.

We need to adapt and adopt alternative paradigms around bacteria and disease. For as long as we've had Germ Theory, there have been opposing researchers who have insisted that it is not bacteria that caused disease, but rather an interruption in the normally healthy ecology of the body which allows pathogenic bacteria to infect it.

We have always and will always live in a sea of bacteria. A healthy body has learned how to deal with them and even to collaborate and depend on them. If bacteria can make us sick- our ecology was already disturbed- meaning we were already sick. Bacterial infection is usually the symptom, not the cause. When we do need help to overcome infection, there are plants that are very strong and effective antibiotics (and they do not create bacterial resistance or negative side effects).

Further, the negative impacts on widespread antibiotic drug and chemical use in the medical, agricultural and industrial fields have created global health and environmental emergencies. Just because these chemicals were invented with the intention to alleviate human suffering, does not mean we are exempt from the devastating consequences of using them. It's time to change everything about the way we think about health, illness, ecology, soil, medicine and agriculture.

Andrea Larsen

Read more from Andrea or sign up for her classes at **www.andrealarsenrncp.com**







In our picturesque corner of the country, known for its beauty, harmony and diversity, a disconcerting trend has taken root. A group of far left-wing extremists, who loudly champion inclusion, diversity, and love, have revealed their true colours by employing bullying tactics and divisive strategies to silence dissenting voices. Such blatant misuse of the moral fabric our community is built on deserves to be called out.

It's a place where we come together to support one another, even when disagreements arise. Yet, this unity has come under siege by a select few who claim to embody the very principles they undermine. The spark for this division was ignited during the Cowichan Bay Estuary debate when local farmers faced the imminent threat of losing prime farmland. Concerned community members rallied behind the cause of food security and sustainable agriculture, recognizing the vital importance of supporting our local farmers.

A very small faction of far-left extremists emerged, intent on stifling opposing viewpoints. Instead of engaging in constructive dialogue, they chose a different path—resorting to personal attacks, intimidation, and smear campaigns against those who supported the farmers or participated in town hall meetings. It became painfully apparent that their commitment to inclusion and diversity was nothing but empty rhetoric.

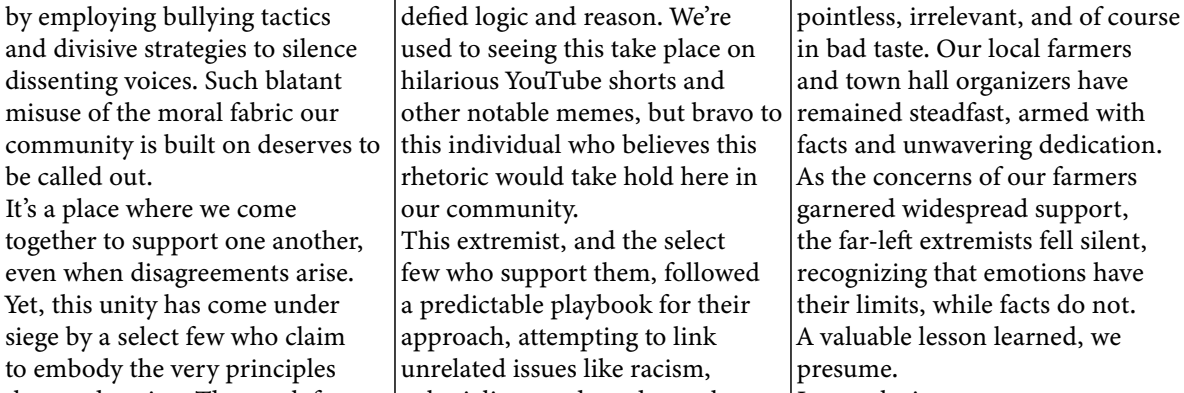
One particularly troubling incident serves as a stark example of their tactics. A local far left-wing amateur journalist penned an article ostensibly about the Cowichan Bay Estuary but quickly veered into an onslaught of personal attacks against individuals involved in organizing or hosting events related to the issue. Rather than focusing on the actual matter at hand, the author attempted to draw tenuous connections to issues like racism and colonialism—a move that defied logic and reason. We're used to seeing this take place on hilarious YouTube shorts and other notable memes, but bravo to this individual who believes this rhetoric would take hold here in our community.

This extremist, and the select few who support them, followed a predictable playbook for their approach, attempting to link unrelated issues like racism, colonialism, and gender to the farming debate. Their goal was transparent: to hoist themselves higher in the far-left groups, and gain trust, and commitment among their followers while casting themselves as righteous crusaders.

Yet, their tactics crumbled when confronted with facts, logic, and the legal intricacies of the issue. The farmers and their supporters prevailed, demonstrating that truth and reason could overcome unfounded accusations and personal attacks. The issues have gone to MLAs and are now being discussed on the Provincial stage. However, the core issue lies in the influence of large NGOs that have manipulated the fears of some left-wing community members. These organizations have weaponized topics such as climate change fears, convincing vulnerable individuals that our community teeters on the brink of an environmental catastrophe. In their desperation to avert this supposed calamity, they've been willing to sacrifice our local farmers and food security. Genius strategy, really.

In this ideological battle, it's vital to remember that our community stands stronger than any divisive force. We were incredibly proud and honoured as locals took to Facebook and YouTube to call these actions for what they were, pointless, irrelevant, and of course in bad taste. Our local farmers and town hall organizers have remained steadfast, armed with facts and unwavering dedication. As the concerns of our farmers garnered widespread support, the far-left extremists fell silent, recognizing that emotions have their limits, while facts do not. A valuable lesson learned, we presume.

In conclusion, our response to these left-wing extremists is not an attack but a defence of our community's values. We must expose their hypocrisy and their misguided attempts to silence opposition. While they may preach inclusion, diversity, and love, their actions speak otherwise. We do recognize the serious weight of propaganda, control, and manipulation which has fallen heavily on their shoulders, however. These global NGOs have spent considerable time and resources to prey on the susceptible minds of our community. While we understand these fears are driving their intentions, we must stand with logic, reason, and support from our community. We stand united, committed to our values, and determined to build a brighter future for all who call this place home. Together, we are stronger, and together, we will prevail against any force that seeks to sow discord and division within our ranks.









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WARREN'S MARKET UPDATE



September looked like a relatively typical fall market but was somewhat slower than expected, so higher interest rates could be catching up with us. Potential buyers seem to be holding out for more favourable rates and conditions. The sellers' market Vancouver Island experienced for the past few years has transitioned to a balanced market although it appears to be moving to one that favours buyers.

Sellers should consider adjusting their expectations if they hope to sell their home in a reasonable amount of time, but with the right game plan and marketing, we can achieve the best results possible.

RE/MAX ISLAND PROPERTIES

COWICHAN VALLEY MARKET STATISTICS - SEPTEMBER 2023

SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED

AVERAGE SALE PRICE

SEPTEMBER 2022: $777,868
SEPTEMBER 2023: $812,476 ↑

NUMBER OF SALES

SEPTEMBER 2022: 47
SEPTEMBER 2023: 45 ↓

DAYS ON THE MARKET

SEPTEMBER 2022: 38
SEPTEMBER 2023: 46 ↑

SOURCE: VIREB MARKET STATISTICS 2023 | WWW.VIREB.COM

RE/MAX ISLAND PROPERTIES

Contact Warren for a no-obligation discussion of your real estate needs and allow this go-getter to put his skills to work!

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