THE WESTWARD INDEPENDENT

A FREE NEWSPAPER

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ISSUE 8



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COWICHAN'S FIGHT AGAINST DRUG SITES AND PUBLIC SUBSTANCE USE

I read that people are very upset about our provincial and local governments' desires to have free injection sites that are obviously not working. These cause huge problems and dangers to our children and our communities. A concerned group met at North Cowichan Municipal Hall to demonstrate their frustration.

I was talking to a friend that takes his grandkids to hockey and he told me that they can no longer go up to the lounge to get a coffee and watch their children as the lounge has been turned into a warming center for the homeless. He said "Here we are tax paying citizens trying to keep our children safe and healthy. We have them involved in sports and off the streets and we are losing our amenities to someone who doesn't pay a cent in taxes."



Photo: Cowichan Valley Community Center - Warming Center

The final straw for me was when I read an article in the National Post telling me that well over a year ago our provincial government legalized giving minors fentanyl without parental consent and eroding parental rights. They have kept it under wraps from the public all this time!

It is beyond me why our governments keep promoting the free supply of drug-enabling sites that have proven over and over again to create much more harm than good. Why does the government promote addiction? These poor people who have lost their souls to drugs don't need enabling centers, they need repair centers. I wonder if it is the guilty conscience of some of our elitist out-of-touch politicians that persuades them to support these toxic ideas?

Here in Cowichan, we have some common-sense politicians but they always seem to get outvoted. We want hospital-like repair centers, not drug-enabling centers.

Sincerely, John Money

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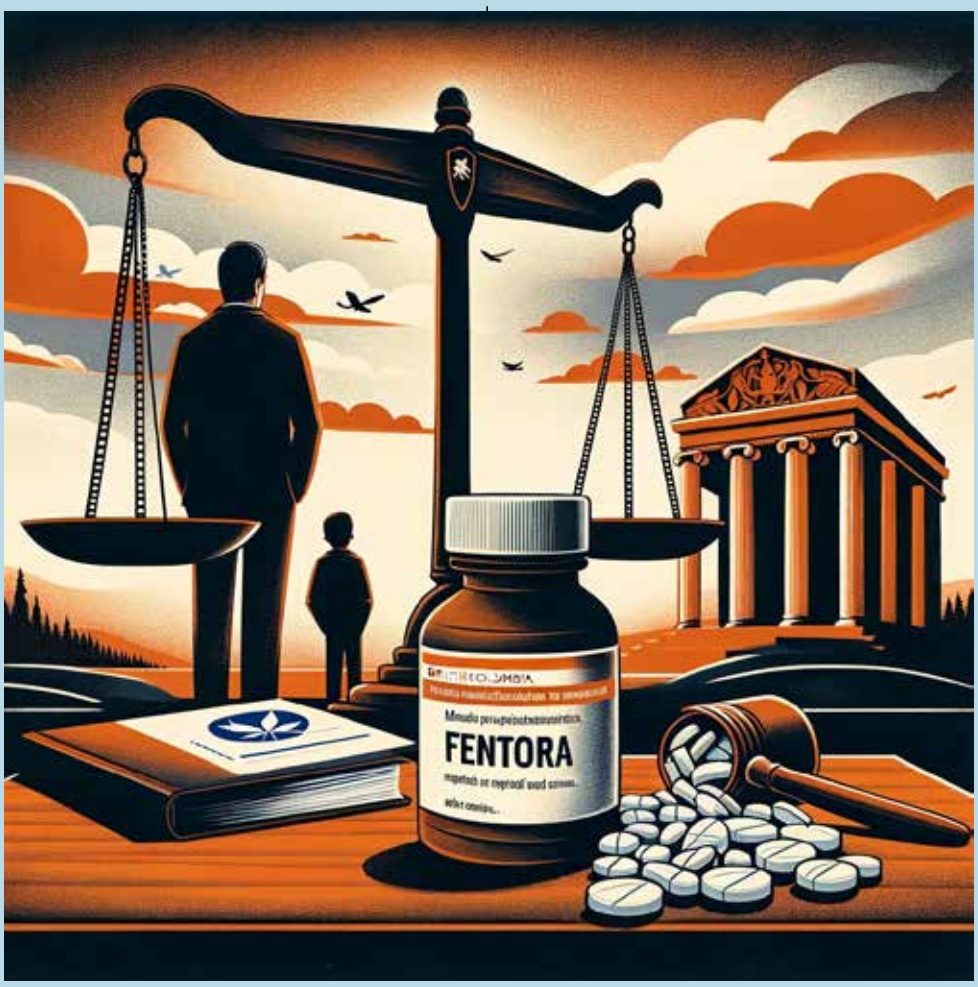
MANY PARENTS ARE UNAWARE OF THE B.C. INFANTS ACT, WHILE OTHERS ARE WELL AWARE, AND HAVE BEEN FIGHTING TO HAVE IT AMENDED TO INCLUDE AGE LIMITS FOR YEARS

The B.C. Infants Act (BCIA), works similarly to others such as some Mature/ Minor Acts, however, the BCIA has no minimum age requirement for consent: Part 2 -- Medical Treatment -- "Consent of infant to medical treatment: 17 (1). "health care" means anything that is done for therapeutic, preventive, palliative, diagnostic, cosmetic or other health-related purposes, and includes a course of health care; (2) Subject to subsection (3), an infant may consent to health care whether or not that health care would, in the absence of consent, constitute a trespass to the infant's person, and if an infant provides that consent, the consent is effective and it is not necessary to obtain a consent to the health care from the infant's parent or guardian."

There are many stories over the years from parents whose children were inoculated in the schools without parental permission and subsequently had reactions. A mother who tried to fight this Act after her son was injured playing sports, and was prescribed opioids by the doctor without her knowledge, only to have him later die from an overdose. Then there is a father who for years fought to keep his pre-pubescent child from medically transitioning, had his hands tied due to this Act. The latest worry from parents is the introduction, brought in last August, of Minors into the Provincial "Safe Supply" program by the British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU).

"FENTORA is an opioid with no approved use in the management of addictive disorders. Its proper usage in individuals with drug or alcohol dependence, either active or in remission, is for the management of breakthrough cancer pain requiring opioid analgesia" (product monograph)

"Pediatrics (< 18 years of age): The safety and efficacy of FENTORA have not been studied in the pediatric population. Therefore, use of FENTORA is not recommended in patients under 18 years of age." (product monograph)



The taxpayer-funded "safe supply" program uses fentanyl tablets, brand name FENTORA, which states at least 6 times in their product monograph is NOT to be used for anyone under the age of 18 ("The safety and efficacy of FENTORA has not been studied in the pediatric population, and that it is only to be used for breakthrough pain in cancer patients that already have an opioid tolerance").

FENTORA, a drug only for use with cancer patients, states it is not to be used even post-cancer treatment for pain, and that the pain management protocol for a cancer patient, already tolerant to opioids, must be given a 100 mcg dose, a maximum of 4 hours apart if there is breakthrough pain to a maximum dose of 800 mcgs. Why then, when looking at the protocols set out by the BCCSU, does it suggest 600-800 mcg treatments at three-hour intervals to begin with? The safe supply protocol has clients start at a 600 mcg dose, who are monitored and can be given the dose three hours apart. The dose can be increased 100 mcgs until the client is titrated, or is stopped at the dose level if the client experiences sedation.

FENTORA (fentanyl buccal/ sublingual effervescent tablets) is intended to be used only in the care of opioid tolerant patients with cancer and only by healthcare professionals who are knowledgeable of, and skilled in, the use of opioids to treat cancer pain.

After the client shows tolerance over 4 doses over four days they are eligible to take the drugs home (after meeting some criteria) and then can have a one-year supply paid for by Pharmacare. In the protocol sheet for clients who are eligible to take the drugs off-site, it is stated that they must know how to treat and overdose, and are supplied with Naloxone, even though the product monograph states that Naloxone will cause 'withdrawal symptoms", which can be extremely severe.

Some of the protocols in the "safe supply" maintenance program are upwards of 2000 mcgs a day, completely ignoring the product's very strict instructions for use. Additionally, there are lengthy protocols for clients who have gone to jail, detoxed, or been off the medication for 30+ days to start them back on at the base protocol of 600 mcgs all over again, as opposed to suggesting rehabilitation, or other avenues after obviously detoxing from this drug.

Even though FENTORA is very clear for whom it may be used: "FENTORA is indicated only for the management of breakthrough pain in cancer patients 18 years of age and older who are already receiving and who are tolerant to continuous opioid therapy for their persistent baseline cancer pain. Patients considered opioid tolerant are those who are taking at least 60 mg of oral morphine daily or an equianalgesic dose of another opioid daily for a week or longer, the criteria for being accepted into the "safe supply" program is far more lax. Some of the criteria listed: "There may be some individuals who have not been diagnosed with an OUD (Opioid Use Dependence), who use unregulated fentanyl and would benefit from accessing prescribed safer supply. It is not a requirement for individuals to have trialled OAT (Opioid Agonist Treatment -- uses medications such as Suboxone and Methadone to treat opioid addiction through oral and/or injection) to be considered. Co-morbid mental and physical health conditions. Prescribed and non-prescribed medication(s) and natural health products".

The FENTORA product monograph is extremely clear on the extreme side effects, with a multitude of contraindications, which are, in essence, every usage beyond cancer pain. As well, FENTORA has 53 pages filled with dire warnings around any off-label usage — warnings that interactions with substances as simple as alcohol can be fatal, and long-term usage warnings that include: "Long-term use of opioids may be associated with decreased sex hormone levels and symptoms such as low libido, erectile dysfunction, or infertility."

Why is a product tested for side effects on dogs, mice and rats, that is extremely transparent around proper usage, being paid for by taxpayers to be trialed off-label in our Province? Minors under 18 years of age should never be included in such a trial, ever. We see safe snorting kits, and safe crack handling protocol handouts being distributed in our schools across the nation. Why? And now this? The fact that your child could access this program without your knowledge is horrific. The Infants Act needs to be amended and updated now once and for all. - **By Staff**

NIGEL ROBERTSON: A NOSTALGIC JOURNEY THROUGH COLOURIZED MEMORIES





1910- An early morning in Duncan's Crossing- The Train just rolled in, The Tzouhalem Hotel is bustling with patrons, the restaurant busy and the town is waking up....Credit to Royal BC Museum Archives, Item E-00433.

Nigel Robertson has gained recognition on Facebook for his unique talent of colourizing vintage black and white pictures, bringing joy to the community.

Nigel's roots trace back to Lake Cowichan, as a third generation local, he spent his childhood in the 80s being raised by a school teacher mother, and a mechanic father who also happened to be a computer enthusiast. Lake Cowichan, a charming small town, holds fond memories for him, characterized by a tight-knit community where children could safely explore, and by trains that would carry logs from the logging town to be processed on the coast.

When speaking with Nigel a couple things became clear; he knows a lot about the history of the area, and feels close to his family roots in the Valley and Lake Cowichan. He could tell you the dates the trains started to roll out of Lake Cowichan to the month they stopped rolling forever, stories about the Hillcrest company bringing their Engine and a few open air cars to Lake Cowichan in the 60's to bring locals on "amusement rides" where folks would clamber on and take a ride to Mesachie Lake, and more when prodded.

Nigel's nostalgic connection to the town, people, and bustle of the trains in Lake Cowichan, inspired him to embark on his colourization journey, starting with a picture of a train on a trestle in Lake Cowichan. Nurtured by his father's passion for computers, Nigel became proficient in various computer-related and multimedia endeavors at a young age. Fourteen years ago, he founded "Recapture Your Memories," (recaptureyourmemories.ca) a company specializing in converting various media formats, such as VHS, MiniDV, 8mm, super 8, Hi8, Beta, and more, into preferred digital mediums for incredibly reasonable rates. While this business thrives on converting media, Nigel's love for colourizing photos transcends commercial motives and is done as a side hobby, and a labor of love. He meticulously selects from multiple software programs, each excelling in specific aspects like sharpening or ease of use for colourization. Initially, he shared his colourized pictures on community Facebook pages, receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback. Some locals however held a preference for the nostalgia of Black and White, so on occasion, Nigel will spend time on these pictures, using his skills and software to enhance and sharpen them while retaining their classic charm.

Nigel is a small town boy with a big heart, and the Valley is lucky to have him and his appreciation for the memories of days long gone. Though he shares his work on some FB pages like 'Old Vancouver Island', and ' Cowichan, My Valley, Do You Remember', he states that FB lowers the resolution, so he places his work on Fliker. Nigel's work can be viewed by requesting a link to his Flicker account by messaging him on FB (Nigel Robertson), or if you are interested in converting some of your old analog memories to a medium you can view and share, he can be reached at **236-594-0584.**





THE SHAWNIGAN VILLAGE RAIL TRAIL PROJECT AND ALLEGED REGULATORY VIOLATIONS

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has found itself entangled in a web of controversy surrounding Phase 3 of the Shawnigan Village Rail Trail (SVRT). From potential environmental impacts to alleged regulatory violations, this project has raised concerns and opposition from various quarters, with locals fighting back to protect their interests.

The project, aimed at constructing a 720-meter-long multi-use recreational trail between the railway tracks and the shoreline, has faced criticism since retired biologist Dave Munday's presentation on June 2, 2021. Munday, also the president of the Shawnigan Basin Society, delivered a comprehensive 130-page report to the EASC, highlighting potential environmental impacts. Surprisingly, this damning report went ignored, leaving many perplexed, especially considering the project's location in a Green Party riding and an area known for its environmental advocacy.

One of the major concerns revolves around the volume of soil to be deposited along the High Water Mark (HWM) of Shawnigan Lake. The CVRD's Request For Proposals estimates this at 2,700 cubic meters, with the potential for infilling the lake if not transported off-site, amounting to a staggering 3,900 cubic meters or 390 dump truck loads.

The construction plan involves a 4-5 meter wide gravel trail on land owned by the Island Corridor Foundation, with a 0.9-meter buffer inside the mandatory 15-meter buffer allowed. The estimates include the removal of 3,000 square meters of vegetation, 1,200 cubic meters of excavations to be transported off-site or deposited along the HWM, and 2,700 cubic meters of embankment fill deposited along the HWM to elevate the trail bed above the flood zone.

CVRD staff enlisted Justin Lange of Madrone Environmental Services Ltd. to provide opinions supporting the trail alignment. Lange's recommendations, encapsulated in Madrone's October 19, 2021 Environmental Impact Assessment/ Environmental Management Plan,

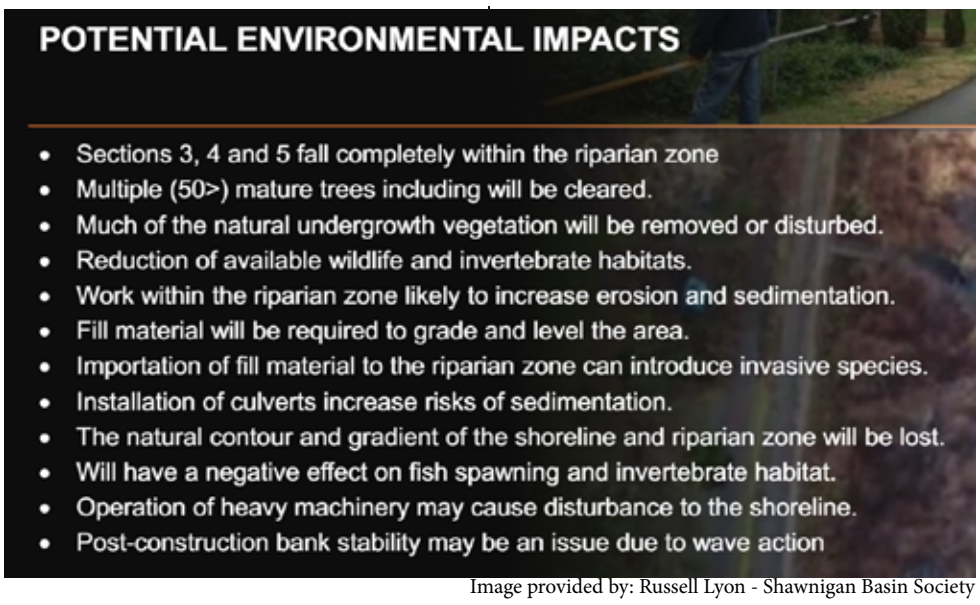


Image provided by: Russell Lyon - Shawnigan Basin Society

raised eyebrows. Concerns were expressed about potential risks, such as a ruptured hydraulic line, and the need for measures like biodegradable hydraulic fluid, avoiding work during inclement weather, and using sediment fences. However, it's noted that no Approval application was made, and Lange's opinions are viewed by critics as intellectually dishonest, seemingly intended to achieve a predetermined outcome.

In a surprising turn of events, the CVRD passed Bylaw 4360 in July 2022, lowering the HWM without any evaluation or change in recommendations by Quality Enhancement Plans (QEPs). This move applied a 0.9-meter setback, contrary to the 15-20 meter setback required by the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation.

During an EASC meeting in April 2022, Shawnigan Director Sierra Acton questioned Lange about the CVRD's adherence to its own rules. Lange's response emphasized going "above and beyond" the regulations, referencing the Water Sustainability Act and Project Review with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. However, critics argue that Phase 3 SVRT failed to meet even the basic riparian protection standards.

In 2023, the CVRD retained a new QEP, Lehna Malmkvist of Swell Environmental Consulting Ltd., whose Environmental Management Plan (EMP) Report echoed Lange's opinions from 2021. This raised concerns about the standard of care required from a QEP, as the report failed to evaluate the reasonableness of the 116.3-meter HWM or the 0.9-meter buffer for the project footprint.

Notably, no Approval Application was submitted under the Water Sustainability Regulation. Instead, a Notification application for a culvert installation and stream work was approved by the Ministry of Forests, albeit with specific conditions. Fisheries and Oceans Canada issued a Letter of Advice, emphasizing adherence to Swell's EMP recommendations. However, this letter does not provide relief from RAPR obligations, indicating the CVRD's failure to meet setback and riparian rules.

Locals, particularly those owning properties in the affected area, are voicing their concerns over lost privacy, with potential impacts on historical homes dating back to the late 1800s. The backlash from the community against the project is gaining momentum, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive reevaluation and adherence to environmental regulations.

The controversy surrounding the Phase 3 Shawnigan Village Rail Trail project underscores the importance of transparent and accountable decision-making in environmental initiatives. Alleged violations, from disregarding damning environmental reports to questionable bylaw changes, demand a thorough review to ensure the protection of sensitive ecosystems and the rights of affected communities. As the community fights back, the CVRD faces a crucial moment in demonstrating its commitment to environmental stewardship and regulatory compliance.

Edited by staff for length and summation, based on detailed information provided by Russell Lyon, a resident directly affected by this pathway.

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CHINESE STUDIES USED TO SWAY LOCAL POLICY?

In the past five months, North Cowichan and the CVRD have been visited by representatives from local climate groups, some with ties to larger, global non-governmental agencies. These individuals were instrumental in urging all local governments to declare a 'climate emergency' in 2019, a dubious decree based on a hyperbolic letter devoid of solid scientific grounding – a resolution that, unfortunately, every local government succumbed to.

Since this orchestrated declaration, the councils and regional districts have been inundated with letters, links, and visits from the same groups, prominently featuring Climate Hub, Carbon Busters, and Transition Cowichan. Their persistent mission: to champion bylaws targeting the ban of natural gas.

The crescendo of this eco-crusade echoed during the debate in North Cowichan regarding the premature adoption of step codes three and four for new builds, a six-year leapfrogging maneuver ahead of the province that essentially functions as a de facto natural gas ban. (Refer to previous



editions for an in-depth exploration of this debate.)

What ploys do these groups employ in their advocacy? Among their arsenal is a dubious study attempting to establish a link between natural gas stoves and childhood asthma. The study, severely criticized for its absence of a control group, resorted to a simplistic calculation based on the number of gas stoves in homes with asthmatic children in the U.S. Adding a layer of skepticism, this study was crafted by the Rocky Mountain Institute, financially backed by the "Energy Foundation China" – a patron that has generously poured $3.8 million into initiatives advocating coal and gas phase-out and the proliferation of electric vehicles, as per Fox News, who obtained their tax records.

Steve Milloy, a discerning figure from the Energy and Environmental Legal Institute and the mind behind JunkScience.com, expressed little astonishment at revelations that China is financing green energy initiatives. Considering China's monopolization of global critical mineral supplies and its potential windfall from the surge in wind and solar, funding climate action groups and orchestrating dubious studies becomes a calculated play.

While global governments engage in strategic games for energy dominance, it is disheartening that the supposedly noble global non-governmental organizations fail to transmit superior information, sound science, and coherent arguments to their foot soldiers dispatched to sway government policies and decision-making processes. The lack of such expectations being met, unfortunately, remains par for the course.

By A. Richards

LITTLE WIN FROM A LITTLE NEIGHBOURHOOD, AGAINST A TELECOM GIANT

On December 20th, North Cowichan Council faced a pivotal decision prompted by a staff recommendation to accept a lease from Rogers Cellular for the installation of six 5G antennas on a water tower in the densely populated Eagle View Place neighbourhood.

Rogers' proposal outlined the placement of antennas on a municipally-owned water tower, entailing a monthly lease fee of $3,333.33 for five years, with three automatic lease renewals. Despite the Rogers representative and Cllr. Istace invoking federal Code 6, which prohibits discussions on health effects and mandates deference to Health Canada, Safety Code 6 explicitly acknowledges the evolving nature of the scientific understanding surrounding 5G technology. Studies suggest potential links to DNA damage and cancer, prompting concerns in various communities, leading to legal battles to restrict antenna installations in sensitive areas like schools and neighbourhoods.

During the subsequent public hearing, neighbourhood representatives passionately expressed concerns about health implications, aesthetic considerations, and fears of decreasing property values. The residents presented a petition, boasting over 100 signatures from those in the water tower's vicinity. Rogers' application to North Cowichan required sending letters to potentially affected residents, yet these communications were criticized for neglecting negative aspects and offering vague justifications such as "better reception" and enhanced capability for handling "more 911 calls." The community argued that Rogers acted questionably, distributing only a handful of letters during the busy Christmas season, containing small print and showcasing a picture from winter 2022.

COAP Inc. joined the effort, providing support and attempting to educate the council on Code 6 while emphasizing the acknowledged dangers associated with these short-range antennas, as admitted by Health Canada.

The council deliberated after thoroughly reviewing the petition. Cllr. Justice moved to deny Rogers' application, asserting that the neighbourhood's concerns warranted respect and recognition of their rights. Cllr. Justice emphasized the importance of neighbourhoods feeling empowered and stated that the council should stand behind the residents. In opposition, Cllr. Istace cited Federal Government directives, arguing against considering health implications and viewing the application as a valuable revenue source. However, Cllr. Justice's motion prevailed. Council members, including Cllr. Findlay, stressed the importance of democracy and acting in the best interests of the neighbours. Cllr. Manhas changed his stance, acknowledging the impact of the petition and presentations. Cllr. Caljouw asserted that the council should consider both mental and physical health of residents. Mayor Douglas and Cllr. Toporowski concurred, resulting in a 5-1 vote against Rogers' application.

This decision marked a small victory for the organized neighbourhood, illustrating the council's consideration of citizens' concerns. However, the context suggests that council decisions often favor well-to-do, retiree-filled neighbourhoods. The victory, though seemingly significant, may also reflect a 'safe' decision for the council, given the broader latitude granted to telecommunication companies in antenna placement. The outcome may inspire other neighbourhoods to unite against unwanted developments, but only time will reveal the extent to which councils genuinely heed citizen input. - **By A. Richards**

COUNCIL WATCH

SOMEONE'S ALWAYS WATCHING...

IT'S US, WE'RE WATCHING.

December was filled with more 2024 Budget reviews and cell antenna concerns. The Budget included much more additional staff being hired, additional taxpayer money to be used for the now depleted forest reserve fund since logging stopped in 2019 awaiting decisions based on a UBC study promoting the usage of the forest for climate credits, more tax money for the climate, and so much more.

Dec 2023:

Every Budget year there is debate over placing more money into the Climate Action Reserve, and every year your tax dollars get put in on a 4-3 vote. Motion: Use Taxpayer's money for the Quamichan Lake Reserve fund and the Climate Action and Energy Reserve fund in 2024 as part of the 2024-2028 Financial Plan. (Opposed, Caljouw, Findlay, Manhas) CARRIED

In the 2024 Budget draft staff suggested a part-time position (approx. 4 hours a day) for one to two people to clean up the corridor. Instead of reaching out to other programs such as Restorative Justice or other groups to possibly integrate this into their working model, taxpayers are on the hook for more of the mess the Province created. Motion: THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to include the following ongoing supplementals in the 2024 Operating Budget: $95,000 for the Corridor Clean-up (Opposed: Findlay, Manhas) CARRIED

In a show of good faith and solidarity with citizen's financial struggles, Cllr. Findlay brought forward a motion that was seconded by Cllr. Manhas: THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends that the Council freeze their wages for 2024. (Opposed: Douglas, Istace, Justice, Toporowski) DEFEATED

Staff recommended: THAT Council approve the five-year License of Occupation with Rogers Communications Inc. for the installation of a rooftop antenna on the Stonehouse Estates Water Reservoir Tower. After over 20 pages of letters sent to council, a petition with 100 signatures, and presentations to council (see longer story in this edition) The motion was DEFEATED. With Istace being the only counselor in favour of the installation.

January 2024:

Staff recommended that council give a grant of $2900 to the Cowichan Estuary and Restoration Association (CERCA) for a microplastic study. Cllr. Justice and Mayor Douglas argued for this grant stating that it was in alignment with the OCP *Restoration and Protection*, while Cllr. Manhas argued against this grant stating that CERCA was known in the past to be against the businesses that resided there such as the sawmill. Cllr. Findlay suggested that a microplastic study would be more of a provincial jurisdictional study. Motion CARRIED (Opposed: Findlay, Caljouw, Manhas)

Staff recommended parcel tax increases and the doubling of excess water usage fees for utilities (which we knew would happen as soon as they separated the utilities from our taxes) Water Parcel Tax Increases: Increase Chemainus 6% per year for ten years; South End 7% per year for ten years; Sewer Parcel Tax Increases: Chemainus 4% per year for ten years; Crofton 6% per year for ten years; South 7% per year for ten years; Increase metered water rates (amounts over minimum) for all water utility systems by 6% in 2024 and an additional 0.5% per year thereafter for nine years. Cllr. Findlay, while agreeing we need to fund our infrastructure, posed the question as to why we could not cut other taxpayer-funded programs that were not part of the infrastructure to help with these costs. Ie the large reserve funds we have for Climate Action and Quamichan Lake etc. Cllr. Manhas opposed the tax hikes, stating that every little dollar counts to people these days especially as we look at having a 5.18% - 5.8% property tax hike this year already. Cllr. Istace stated that we need to look years down the road for our infrastructure needs instead of today. Motion CARRIED (Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)

Council heard a presentation from Urban Systems (a private consulting group - taxpayer funded) regarding MODELS of proposed climate risks and disasters waiting for us around the corner. The motion was to pass this report on to the Environmental Advisory Committee (a committee consisting of a few layman volunteers and headed by Cllr. Caljouw). After the presentation, filled with scary-looking graphs and predictions, Cllr. Findlay asked if these graphs could be changed to percentages for phase three - ie "this is the percentage of likelihood of this event happening", as opposed to big, red graphs. Motion CARRIED (Opposed Findlay, Manhas)

COP 28 - THE MEETING OF THE MINDS? OR A CONFERENCE TO CHANGE YOUR FUTURE?

Report on the UN's Climate Change Conference held in Dubai, UAE, Nov. 30 to Dec 12, 2023, Was the COP28 conference a success? Judging by the number of delegates it must have been. There were 84,000 delegates from 195 countries, including 747 from Canada. Also, the number of commitments and pledges made were impressive enough to scare any sceptic. Here are the principal ones:

On the 1st and 2nd December, 176 world leaders gathered for the World Climate Action Summit (WCAS), signalling a new era of climate action on the road to 2030. Over 90% of country delegates signed on to this. 2. The Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture (less meat and dairy; eat bugs) was well supported by 136 signatures. 3. A "Loss and Damage Fund" was established to compensate developing countries for losses from climate change. $420 million was pledged in the first hour. That will predictably be abused to the max. 4. The "Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge" was signed by 120 countries. 5. The "Global Methane Pledge" was signed by 155 countries and 50 oil companies, despite atmospheric methane levels being negligibly small. 6. The "Declaration on Climate Relief, Recovery and Peace" was signed by 70 countries and 39 NGOs. 7. The "Declaration on Climate and Health" was signed by 124 countries.

In my view as a member of the sceptics, this is a totalitarian movement and as Hannah Arendt pointed out in her 1951 book, The Origins of Totalitarianism, all such movements in the past were based on the "Big Lie" which could not be challenged. They were thus divorced from the world of reality, as is exemplified by the UN's IPCC ignoring real-world measurements of temperature and preferring its own computer-model projections over which it has complete control. That way it can continue to claim that the world is facing disaster, and is thereby enabled to follow its anti-human, sociopathic agenda.

In that respect, the COP28 Conference was indeed a success. The "Climate Change" movement has become unstoppable and its agenda will cost us all dearly with great loss of our freedoms and ever-decreasing living standards.

JayBee





TAMMY'S TIPS!

Happy New Year! Well, even though the days are starting to get longer, they don't feel that long yet, which leads to more cozy home time, more baking, and puttering. As I was puttering around the kitchen, I was organizing some of my jars filled with bacon grease, and wondered if folks nowadays saved their grease, as many of our ancestors did? With butter jumping from $3.79 a pound to over $7 locally, it made me turn even more to my bacon grease when cooking.

I scoop a teaspoon-full and place it on my cast iron pan before cooking eggs, grilled cheese, quesadillas and so much more! And bonus, I never seem to have to season my pans! If you do need to season your pans, you can with bacon grease just make sure you place it on a cookie sheet as dripping grease can be flammable. Speaking of flammable, I have taken bacon grease, placed it small little jars I have collected, added a wick from the craft store, and made myself little long lasting candles with this versatile fat.

You can substitute a recipe that calls for butter with half butter and half bacon grease...this truly makes the best biscuits! Brushing melted bacon grease on small cubes of bread and then baking, makes for amazing croutons, that retain the flavour and smell of the bacon. Besides cooking and making candles, I haven't ventured elsewhere with other uses, but tallow, lard, and other solid greases have been like liquid gold to so many cultures for so long. I think I will explore making some suet cakes for the little birds next. Is the silver lining to this recession that society becomes less waste-not want-not? I don't know, but saving your bacon grease and washing your tinfoil as our elders did, can't hurt.



If you have a hot tip, please send them in to editor@wwind.ca

Tammy

NUT BAR CHRONICLES: #HATEGATE HOOPLA & RCMP'S TWITTER TANGO

Welcome back to the Nut Bar, where we blend political satire with a sprinkle of surrealism and a dash of daring. This month, we're slicing through the thick crust of #HateGate, a saga so spicy it makes a ghost pepper look like a bell pepper!

Our tale begins with the RCMP, prancing through a jungle of tweets and whispers like ballerinas lost in a techno forest. Imagine our national heroes playing Twister: right hand on 'credible source', left foot sinking in the mire of 'social media swamp'. And oh, the plot thickens like a mystery gravy!

Enter the Canada Anti-Hate Network, those digital neighbourhood vigilantes. They're still around, binoculars up, scouring for online nastiness. In this unfolding drama, though, they seem more like gobsmacked spectators at a circus show, gasping as the clowns pile out of the tiny car.

Then, rising like dough in an overzealous baker's oven, comes the Emergencies Act. This rusty lever, pulled from the Canadian government's toolbox, aimed to calm the tempest of protests and blockades. Picture downtown Ottawa, transformed into a circus ring, with trucks roaring and streets twisting into a kaleidoscope of mayhem. The Act's introduction was as unexpected as finding a pickle in your ice cream sundae.

But not everyone found this flavor palatable. Critics, like the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, squinted at the kitchen and argued it was more smoke than fire. They likened the Act to using a flamethrower to toast a marshmallow - a bit much for a situation that hadn't quite erupted into a full-blown national barbecue.

Now, sauntering onto stage left, meet the local group of self-proclaimed truth crusaders, our very own keyboard knights in tarnished armor. Despite the gravity of measures like the Emergencies Act, these local gumshoes, armed with more zeal than sense, set out to author exposés on anyone even faintly tinged with right-wing hue. Picture them as squirrels in a disco ball factory: frenzied, distracted, and endlessly spinning.

Their 'investigative' methodology? A frenetic dance through social media, confusing retweets with Rosetta Stones. They're akin to amateur chefs trying to make soufflés with a blowtorch – high on enthusiasm, low on finesse. Their articles are a mishmash of unverified tweets and secondhand chitchat, more akin to fictional novels than journalism, a universe away from the nuanced approach of groups like CCLA.



Photo: WWIND file photo

And for the grand finale: their magnum opus, a concoction of conspiracy theories, swirled together with a generous dollop of wild accusations. Think of it as the literary version of spotting Bigfoot at a tea party – intriguing, but utterly lacking in substance.

As we conclude this month's journey through the tangled vines of political satire and the long shadow of the Emergencies Act, let's raise a toast to these digital Don Quixotes. In their wildly misguided quest for relevance, they remind us that politics often masquerades as a comedy, especially in the most sincere attempts.

So, as you wade through the swamp of misinformation, take a moment to chuckle at the theater of the absurd. Here at the Nut Bar, we'll keep serving up the satirical treats, one hilariously overcooked story at a time. **- Joseph**

SCRAMBLE, WHAT SCRAMBLE?

Scrambling for Sense: How Our Town's 'Green' Intersection Turned Red with Embarrassment

In the latest episode of 'green initiatives gone wild', our beloved town has transformed a major intersection into a pedestrian scramble, turning what was once a bustling hub into a comical display of traffic turmoil. It's a masterpiece of irony: an intersection where cars stand still, and emissions stand tall.

Picture this: every traffic light glaring red, as if to mock the very notion of movement. Pedestrians, empowered by their newfound diagonal dominion, cross with an air of triumph. Meanwhile, drivers sit, stewing in a cocktail of frustration and exhaust fumes, as traffic backs up further than the line at the Doghouse Sunday morning breakfast.

This move, hailed as a triumph of the climate agenda, seems to have backfired with the subtlety of a diesel truck in a library. The plan was to reduce emissions, but now, with cars idling in kilometer-long queues, our air smells more like a mechanic's workshop than a floral paradise.

It seems our local left-leaning leaders, in their relentless pursuit of green glory, missed a crucial lesson in Logistics 101. With side streets blocked and northbound traffic in a perpetual state of despair, one wonders if their next move is to replace cars with unicorns.

In light of these events, I propose a solution: perhaps we should convert our entire town into a pedestrian scramble. Cars? Obsolete. Bicycles? Too mainstream. Let's hop, skip, and jump our way to work. Efficiency be damned – we're saving the planet, one absurd step at a time.

So while the intention behind the scramble might be as green as spring grass, the execution has been as muddled as a mud puddle. It's a classic tale of climate ambition clashing with the harsh mistress of practicality. So, as we sit in traffic, breathing in the sweet scent of irony (and carbon monoxide), let's give a round of applause for our town's latest comedy of errors.

By Joseph





A COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OF NORTH COWICHAN'S ELECTRIC VEHICLE FLEET DECISION: UNVEILING POTENTIAL PITFALLS

In recent reports from the Cowichan Valley Citizen and the Chemainus Valley Courier, the decision by the North Cowichan Council to transition its municipal fleet to electric vehicles (EVs) has come under scrutiny. This report aims to provide a cautionary perspective, shedding light on information that might have influenced the decision and urging a reevaluation due to potential financial implications for North Cowichan taxpayers.

The news articles prominently featured statements from Jennifer Ashcroft, a self-proclaimed "climate change scientist," who asserted that the municipal fleet accounted for 735 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in 2021. However, a closer examination reveals that this figure represents the weight of fossil fuel consumed by the vehicles, not the actual weight of CO2 emissions. This distinction is crucial as it forms the basis of the decision to transition to EVs, raising questions about the urgency created by the use of this tonnage in the reports.

Furthermore, the report highlights concerns about the alleged "fraud" associated with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which has shaped the narrative around global warming and severe weather events. The report delves into the purported misinformation and questions the urgency to replace the fleet based on the IPCC's theory of CO2 causing global warming.

An individual named Geoff Strong, described as a local "climate scientist" with a Ph.D. in atmospheric physics, is brought into the spotlight due to his potential influence on the decision. Despite his qualifications, concerns are raised about his agreement with the IPCC theory and his role on the Environmental Committee.

The core of the report challenges the IPCC's theory regarding CO2 causing global warming. The theory suggests that CO2, emitted from the burning of fossil fuels, rises to an altitude of 15 km above the planet, forming a "greenhouse/CO2 layer" that traps heat and causes global warming. This report dismantles the theory, emphasizing that CO2, being heavier than surrounding air, cannot rise to such altitudes. The alleged layer's thickness and density are questioned, considering the continuous rise in CO2 emissions since the Industrial Revolution.

In the interest of transparency, the report offers to share email exchanges with the IPCC during an investigation on the subject. It urges the council to engage in a comprehensive review, considering data from various sources and perspectives, to ensure informed decision-making.

The report also addresses the potential environmental and ethical concerns related to EVs, including the destruction of the environment during battery mineral mining, child labor, fossil fuel use in the mining process, and the economic feasibility of battery replacement. It raises alarms about the dangers of lithium-ion batteries and the need for a thorough risk assessment.

It is crucial for the North Cowichan municipal government to consider all available data before making decisions that could impact taxpayers significantly. The call for a reevaluation is based on the need for decisions to be grounded in evidence, facts, and truth. The report concludes by seeking a response from the council, emphasizing the importance of reconsidering the decision in light of the presented information.

John, Municipality of North Cowichan, Duncan

ECHOES OF DISSENT: CHALLENGING THE 'NET-ZERO' NARRATIVE

To all of those who use their voices to question the suicide note that is 'Net-Zero', and do so in the face of ridicule and condemnation, we know that we, the human species, are the carbon to be reduced, I salute you. Last week the front page of the Relic Media were lit up by the revelation that in November, during a [leaked] video call with special envoy for climate change, Sultan Al Jaber of the United Arab Emirates (President of COP28 and chief executive of the UAE State Oil company Adnoc) said there was no science indicating a phase out of fossil fuels is needed to restrict Global heating to 1.5 centigrade, and that to take away oil and gas would take the world back into the caves. The Sultan's remarks spur outrage from the usual suspects, but his choice of words was important. "Back into caves", out of the mouths of babes and Sultans it turns out, comes the truth. Those dismissive of any crises suspect the intention of the suicide note of 'Net Zeror' is precicely as Al Jaber says, to so impoverish the developed, industrialized West, that a new Dark Age ensues Global Neo-Feudalism will see a tiny group of unimaginably wealthy people reign over the billions, as we scramble for scraps. Look around now as the nights draw in, as they always do, at this time of year in the North, and the sun is absent, and the wind doesn't blow, and know the turbines and solar panels ain't going to cut it for the peoples of the Northern Hemisphere. Know too that claims of climate crises are the stick with which we are beaten into submission, to digital IDs, and programmable tokens, in a place of freedom, to save or spend our earnings as we see fit, without the surveillance and permission of the state. To all those who know this and have been speaking about this for years, I say your voices are more powerful than perhaps you know. Even in the darkest of times, we should know we are on a wondrous journey, and the truth is that more and more follow. Travelers are joining every day. The more you speak, the easier it becomes to say more. I say, 'you are right, don't doubt you are right'.

(Excerpts from GB News YouTube, Neil Oliver, Sat Dec 9th, 2023)



CAN YOU AFFORD TO RETROFIT YOUR HOME? NORTH COWICHAN HAS DEMONIZED SINGLE FAMILY HOMES AS "POLLUTERS"

After reading all of the local 'plans', from the OCP, the whole transportation plan, and the Climate Action and Energy Plan, it is clear what North Cowichan has in store for us until 2050.

Many of these plans entail drastic changes to our lifestyles, or as previous Cllr. Marsh stated in the preface to the OCP "We will fundamentally have to change the way we live, work..." Plans include reducing vehicle usage down to 40% of residents, with other plans stating all older homes be retrofitted to meet modern step codes. While 99.9% of people interviewed tend to scoff at North Cowichan's future ideas of life here and share sentiments such as "yeah right, they can't make me", we try to expose how they actually can, by looking to the country's few years ahead of us policy-wise, such as the UK.

The UK states that homes may end up with a taxation penalty for not retrofitting, as they do with gas vehicles, to 'cut the carbon footprint'. Costs of heating of energy has skyrocketed all over Europe, due mostly to the green agenda, and other contributors such as the Nord Stream pipeline sabotage. A recent report estimates that the UK needs to retrofit 29 million homes to "reach net-zero" by 2050. Upgrades include: Solar panels (of which the citizens of UK chuckle at, if you know anything about the weather there you would as well), insulation, triple pane windows, and heat pumps even though 80% of the UK relies on gas to heat their homes. While back here at home, we saw B.C. Hydro import an extra 10,000 gigawatt hours in 2023. This additional import covered approximately one-fifth of the province's energy needs at a cost of about $450 million. B.C. Hydro is currently asking people to use LESS power during the winter, claiming there has been record-breaking energy demands during the recent cold snap, and is stating that our rates will increase in 2024 (again). Meanwhile, our local government feels B.C. Hydro has the ability to handle its "all-electric" future plans.

Powerex Corp., an energy marketer, is a wholly owned corporate subsidiary of BC Hydro and a key participant in wholesale energy markets across North America. Powerex's job is to make money for the province through buying and selling energy, of which you can not track what power source they import (ie coal, LNG, etc) that ends up here for end use (Hint, the "Powered by Water" charging stations are rather misleading). Is retrofitting your home, and installing heat pumps truly 'green', or just another cash grab to squeeze those who currently own homes, out?

A blow to UK residents came from a recently introduced Energy Bill. Under the new Energy Bill, property owners, who do not adhere to regulations to reduce their energy consumption, could face severe consequences. These consequences include imprisonment for up to a year and fines of up to £15,000. This has caused alarm within the UK population, many of whom are already struggling to pay their energy bills. For tenants, this legislation could have several worrying implications. Property owners of older buildings are facing a challenging and costly situation, as many may not have the financial resources to make these improvements, leading to the risk of hefty fines or even imprisonment.

The UK also has a similar 'step code' with categories A-F, wherein you may not rent your house out if you have an E or an F rating on your home in regards to efficiency. Each home has been rated and owners must show their rating prominently if attempting to sell their homes, and therefore take a large hit on the sales price with a lower letter score as most are at about a C or D level.

A letter was sent to council here by a Climate Caucus member (yes the same ones interacting with council during the creation of our OCP - see FOIA on Coap.ca) asking to push forward a plan that would see property owners get 'loans' on their land to retrofit, a loan that would be added to your property tax bill, and would stay with the land when sold. They can demand your home be at a certain step code to sell or do any renovations - there are so many ways they can "make you".

In the end, our Mayor has stated clearly that nothing usurps the Climate Action Plan which has retrofitting as one of the main ways they can meet their "carbon" targets. Maybe it is time to start speaking up and spreading the word, before you are pushed out of your house into the new 400 sq ft apartments that are being crowded into your "growth centres", aka 15 min. cities.

By A Richards

As of the writing of this article, Dease lake, British Columbia, sits at -43°C and the town's power is overloaded. Power is being rotated, and residents are asked to unplug everything besides heat.





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Westward Independent is proud to serve as a platform for community discourse and celebrates the diversity of opinions that contribute to a vibrant community. While we are committed to providing a space for varying viewpoints, publication in our 'Letters to the Editor' does not imply our endorsement of the opinions expressed. We encourage our readers to engage with the content critically and with respect for the diverse perspectives of our contributors.

Dear WWIND,

In 2019 I decided to buy a hybrid electric car. My goal was to find an environmentally sensitive vehicle that would last for at least 10 years. My job required a lot of travel since I saw clients in their homes. I researched the options and then went to Toyota. When I met with the salesman, I told him exactly what I was looking for - environmentally sensitive and durable for long commuting. He showed me the 2020 Prius Prime. According to him, it ticked all my boxes. He pointed out an older generation Prius parked in the showroom that had been used for a taxi in Vancouver which had over 1-Million kms and was still running. He told me the car was over 20 years old and so well constructed that it had needed minimal maintenance or repairs. I was assured I could expect the same in the Prius Prime if I bought it. I purchased the car believing that I'd bought a car that would last me at least 20yrs.

Being hybrid electric, I could plug the car in to charge the hybrid battery. Initially in summer, a full charge gave me 60 km of electric driving. In the winter I got 50km on a full charge. However, 4 years (and 200,000km later), I asked Toyota to look at my battery because I was getting less than 40km on a full charge in mild winter conditions. A full diagnostic was run on my battery showing there were no issues, my battery was just aging. I inquired about the cost of replacement. The agent advised me a new hybrid battery would cost $12,524, plus 6 hrs labour, bringing the total to $13,475 plus tax. I was shocked and told her the new battery was likely more expensive than my car. I explained that I had purchased the car believing it was my ethical, environmental lifetime car and said I was very upset because they had sold me a disposable car. She agreed with me adding "I'm concerned with the older generation batteries that are reaching the end of their lifetimes. There is no way to recycle them." We spoke of toxic batteries in landfills, of children in the Congo mining the cobalt and of other lies we had been told about these "ethical and environmental responsible cars." Were all of the claims just lies?

Cowichan Valley Resident

Dear WWIND,

The government uses Canfor (Jimmy Pattison is the owner, who also owns Save On Foods) to spray poisons all over BC and this has been happening for a very long time. We have just never been notified as citizens. They are killing all plants that are broadleaf. That also means food for deer, moose etc. And when those toxins go into wildlife, via their skin and their foods, it makes them sick too. It affects our foods as well since a lot of us are hunters and foragers, myself included.

They do not notify us in regards to any spraying in BC. They spray along the highways above us in Kelowna which is a major animal corridor and nobody in our area is let known. The forests around us are sprayed and they haven't told us. They may put a notice up somewhere on the net, but they don't let citizens know personally, otherwise, more people would know about these acts of killing our land. Fact is, hardly anyone knows about the poisons sprayed all over BC to keep the competition away from the pine. There are campers and outdoors people everywhere. These poisons should not be used at all. Not at all! And they use these poisons on clear cuts before tree planters even go in. This stuff is in the ground dirt and on plants that they are touching. Even small amounts are not healthy for any living thing. Not insects or us, or bears, deer and moose, etc. As a past tree planter, we weren't even told about these poisons in the area that we were working. Decades later I found out about these poisons being sprayed before tree planters go in. This is horrific to find out because as a tree planter, I wanted to plant for our earth and yet the job put me right into the poisons.

They sprayed these poisons at the hotel at 3 valley gap along the lake/railway illegally even only 2.5 yrs ago. We could see all the red dead trees along the lake along the train tracks and up, which is right beside the lake by 20 feet and less. Huge fines are handed out to CN or CP rail but the fines are like a slap on the hand to them. They didn't care that they put poisons in the lake. If there was notice to the people, this never would have happened in the first place. Fined? That's all??? It never should have happened in the first place! These poisons and all poisons need to stop being used altogether!

It kills all our broad leaf plants (leaves and berries and roots for the wildlife), which adds moisture to the soils and air. The broad leaf plants act as a fire barrier which was clearly seen on opposite sides of sugar lake. The fire went right through the west side (pine area that is so dry with not even moss growing) and only smoldered through the east side (major diverse tree and plant species area with cedars, poplars, pine, hemlock, tons of berries, etc).

These poisons kill everything that creates balance in our forests. I have personally seen this and experienced this. These are my words from my own experiences.

Thank you for being part of a change that is dearly needed and will happen. We need more people to become aware though. We need to stop these poisonous sprays of all kinds to be stopped from being used.

Stephanie Fortune, Kamloops B.C.

Dear WWIND,

Concerning Parks Canada killing 84 deer on Sidney Island for $834,000.00, I have a question: "Does that cost include all the money that was spent planning this event?" My calculations say that the actual price is $9,928.58 per deer. 1,765 pounds of meat was harvested or, put another way, 21 pounds per animal, putting the cost at $472.52 per pound! I have harvested quite a few deer in my lifetime including fallow deer. Getting only 21 pounds of meat per deer tells me they have only cut off the hind quarters and thrown the rest away as any deer I have harvested, after processing, is 50 pounds and up.

The final irony for me is that the shooters hired to shoot the deer on Sidney Island came from the USA and New Zealand. Canada has produced some of the finest marksmen and markswomen in the world. To make it worse the shooters were firing from helicopters using semi automatic weapons which were equipped with sound suppressors (silencers). This form of hunting and using sound suppressors is totally illegal in Canada and anybody caught doing it would most assuredly be headed straight for jail.

This spending of taxpayers dollars by Parks Canada seems to be right in line with the wasteful spending and policies demonstrated by our federal government.

Sincerely, John Money

Dear WWIND,

When it comes to "climate change" the Corrupt Canadian Mainstream Media (CCMM) doesn't seem to want to ever give up on promoting the FRAUD.

("SHARP DECLINE IN SNOWPACK DUE TO HUMAN-CAUSED CLIMATE CHANGE: STUDY"). Times Colonist, article from Canadian Press. Jan.11/23

Soooo, it's "human-caused climate change" now? If I may ask, where in hell is the proof that CO2, from the burning of fossil fuels, causes global warming, and subsequent decline in "snow pack"? Well, I'll be damned, the "researchers out of New Hampshire Dartmouth College say it's from, now get this folks, "climate models". Yup, models. And when it comes to climate change, models have proven time, and time, and time again, to be unreliable. The known fact is there is no proof whatsoever, that CO2 is causing our planet to warm. Hey folks, don't believe me? Then go looking for it. But the CCMM will never stop pushing the bullshit.

John Walker, Cobble Hill

There is insanity in the BC Courtroom and lawlessness in BC's parks and playgrounds.

Chief Justice Christopher Hinkson of the BC Supreme Courts has ruled against seniors, disabled people and families with children and come down solidly on the side of drug users.

When BC said yes to follow the federal government's encouragement into a highly experimental "pilot project" and decided to decriminalize illicit drugs, that included fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, meth, and MDMA as long as it was only 2.5 grams, all of these dreadfully debilitating drugs were allowed legally into our fair province. But, there was a stipulation: Don't do drugs within 15 meters of playgrounds, wading pools, and outdoor skate parks. 15 meters doesn't seem like a lot to me. However our police force was instructed by our government not to arrest any violators but were told to move these drug addicts on. And there were, of course, plenty of violators.

The Harm Reduction Nurses Association took the province to court as they considered the law unconstitutional to drug users. Chief Justice Hinkson ruled that forcing the drug users to move on was violating their Constitutional Rights. In May 2023, Premier Eby said "Nobody wants this activity affecting our kids, and we will do something." But we have now entered 2024 and where is the "something" that Premier Eby promised? Nowhere in sight!

Apparently children, families, disabled persons and seniors are second class citizens according to Chief Justice Hinkson. They do not have the same rights as drug users and the often repellent behaviour that accompanies their addictions. During the pandemic, our society learned the importance of children having free play. The masking, absence of play and interaction with other children brought forth a lower IQ amongst these unfortunate children.

The NDP government wants more intense, heavier buildup of all cities and towns, with a goal to lead to 15 Minute Cities. Where are these people with little or no yards supposed to go? Now the very people who use the parks most: families with children, disabled people and seniors are being intimidated out of our public parks that the taxpayers of BC have paid for!

I would be extremely uncomfortable if I was in a park with my grandchildren pushing them on swings and a drug user sat in the area and started shooting up. I would definitely feel intimidated out of the playground. I would feel afraid for both the child in my care and for my own safety. After working hard all my life and paying a lot of taxes, I find that I don't have the protection of the law like a drug addict does. Premier Eby's government lost in Court to a Chief Justice who probably lives in a beautiful home with a large yard and doesn't need to go to a park to enjoy nature but probably goes to Whistler or his summer cabin to enjoy it.

Why do the rights of a few addicts trump the rights of the many ordinary people? If Premier Smith and Premier Moe have enough guts and strength of character to use the "Notwithstanding Clause" to protect their provinces from the federal government's voracious appetite for yet more taxes, than surely Premier Eby should have the strength of character and guts to use this same "Notwithstanding Clause" to protect our most vulnerable citizens: children, disabled people and seniors. Premier Eby: Stand up for your citizens, use the "Notwithstanding Clause" now!

A disgusted citizen,

Carol Money

Petition for Canada to withdraw from the UN and its Subsidiaries

Applicant: Ministry of Forests, Range Branch, 441 Columbia Street, Kamloops, BC V2C 2T3

invasive.plants@gov.bc.ca, 604-996-4683 RE: DEVELOPMENT OF A PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN (APR 15, 2024 - APR 15, 2029)

APPLICATION NUMBER FOR-SBR-PMP-2024-2029

I have lived in BC my entire life and my family and I enjoy the wilderness that beautiful BC has to offer. I am concerned about the above noted application that I read about in my local paper, the Comox Valley Record on Nov 15 + Nov 22, 2023.

I had a look at the PMP Draft report. I notice that the specific details about the affected locations for the treatment areas are not indicated, why is that? What locations will these herbicides and chemicals be applied? Are they areas in which people frequent and access recreationally? What about the animals, pollinators, birds and other wildlife that may come into direct contact with the herbicides and chemicals - has this been considered? I also noticed that 'Cultural Control' is noted in the plan - what exactly is that? Who decides what is considered 'cultural'? We need plants and trees to produce the oxygen we breath and they in turn, take our carbon dioxide and provide food and valuable nutrients and ingredients. When herbicides (insecticides and pesticides) are sprayed and applied, they often affect more than the intended target. The residue lingers and can travel through the air and water. I am very concerned with the health and well being of the animals, wildlife, insects and pollinators that reside in the various areas. I am also concerned about the humans that live nearby or visit the various areas.

How will people be informed that they may come into contact with harmful chemicals when they hike through a forested area? Will there be signs posted and if so, for how long before and after the application of herbicides and chemicals? How about the people hired and tasked with the application of these herbicides and chemicals - have they been properly informed of the risk?

What if any human, pet or animal end up developing cancer or another adverse health event from exposure to these herbicides and chemicals? Who is liable, who is responsible? There are lawsuits against Bayer for it's product, Roundup, which contains Glyphosate (as referenced in Appendix A.3). Has this type of approach as noted within the proposed draft PMP been proven successful? If yes, please provide the details to substantiate that claim. Arich bio-diverse forest self-manages.

Why isn't biodiversity part of the plan? This type of proposal will not encourage biodiversity but rather assist with mono-culture, which can make things worse. This is a four year proposed plan for a large portion of BC and the public is only invited to reply for 30 days - this is inadequate and not meaningful to the public (or the environment) that will have to live with the consequences of such a plan. The notice was only put into a local newspaper for a couple of weeks. Why isn't this information being put out through our local town/city councils? People are not being properly informed about the risks associated with the 'proper use' of multiple chemicals (within the herbicides) that are proposed to be used. I have many concerns about the chemicals. The public has not been given an opportunity to be properly informed or to have meaningful input. - **Hilary Jones Comox Valley, BC**

WARREN'S MARKET UPDATE

With rumours of interest rate decreases coming in early 2024, many buyers have chosen to sit on the sidelines in recent months, as indicated by a slower-than-usual December. However, there is certainly pent-up demand out there, so this coupled with interest rate decreases should equate to a fairly busy spring with the potential for a modest increase in home prices.

Give me a call and let's put together a game-plan!



RE/MAX ISLAND PROPERTIES

COWICHAN VALLEY MARKET STATISTICS - DECEMBER 2023

SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED

AVERAGE SALE PRICE

DECEMBER 2022: $738,207
DECEMBER 2023: $772,611 ↑

NUMBER OF SALES

DECEMBER 2022: 29
DECEMBER 2023: 26 ↓

DAYS ON THE MARKET

DECEMBER 2022: 56
DECEMBER 2023: 45 ↓

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

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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BE YOUR OWN DOCTOR -- USE MOTHER NATURE'S MEDICINE!

Have you ever wondered why natural remedies, herbs and homeopathy are not used as a first-resort? Does it make sense to use a synthetic alternative created by men and machines that sadly comes with a long list of bad effects? Clearly we've been deceived.

Have you heard about the infamous "Flexner Report" (Medical Education in the United States and Canada; nicknamed for its author Abraham Flexner) published in 1910, that completely altered the path of medicine in North America for personal gain, greed and profit? Unbelievable!

Prior to Flexner's report, medical colleges focused on holistic health, homeopathy and herbalism and they were popular and growing. The report commissioned by the American Medical Association, funded by the Carnegie Foundation, changed all that. Then Rockefeller got involved realizing the oil industry would make fortunes through the use of toxic pharmaceuticals, undermining trust in plant-based medicine was part of the plan.

Our medical education system was hijacked by a greedy group, and we have an ineffective system that chooses to suppress symptoms through synthetic substances. Where does the symptom go? The 'new' medical schools focused on teaching only about surgery and using pharmaceuticals! Cut it out or medicate it with potential customers for life, dismissing, destroying and burying generations of evidence and observations showing herbs, food, natural remedies, and later Homeopathy is clearly more effective than their toxic pills. It's time people learned about this 'bait and switch'!! Harmful pharma pills should only be used as a last resort.

I am fascinated by the general consensus of people to "just go to the doctor" with any little symptom that arises. This is causing the collapse of the acute care services at our facilities which is clearly necessary medicine for which I am grateful.

I have been studying and using natural remedies, herbs and healing with Nature for 25+ years. The remedies are all around us — lemon balm, dandelion, plantain, ginger, garlic and so much more! We need to turn to ourselves first as healers as our Creator intended.

I am passionately studying Homeopathy, and I have learned that it isn't difficult to "be your own doctor" and use focused research to educate yourself in all the ways to help your body deal with any symptom. Homeopathic remedies are safe, easy to find and use to naturally help to relieve your symptoms. There are many fabulous resources on line and some great workshops too!

I encourage you to search out Nature's healing answers for yourself next time you're feeling a symptom or two. look to natural remedies, herbal teas, poultices, ointments and your body will thank you for helping it in the way the Creator intended. Happy Winter and healing herbal tea time!

- Diana Pink

***Web links provided for reference in digital version at www.wwind.ca**





QUANTUM HEALING FOR NATURAL HEALTH

My first experience with quantum healing was a 'distance' healing session more than 15 years ago. I was utterly amazed by the sensations I experienced and the changes that occurred. "Distance" meant that the practitioner and I weren't in the same space. It was a paradigm shift moment of great magnitude. While some may be more adept than others, anyone with a desire can learn energy healing, so I did. I believe that it is, at the current time, a largely unacknowledged birthright. I have studied a number of different modalities and use as appropriate. I have explored many aspects of health and healing which I am happy to share and often come up during sessions.
- Steven Lay

While modern, mainstream science does not have the tools to describe or quantify the mechanics and functioning of energy healing modalities in general, many people experience benefits from a wide range of practices, be it quantum healing, reiki or a host of others. As quantum physics now postulates, it is a blurred line between particle and wave. Vibration would appear to be foundational to the universe and all components thereof. As an easy example, many or most people are familiar with "feeling the vibe."

Quantum healing is a very simple form of energy healing which provides support for the individual's physical/emotional/spiritual aspects to connect with their "self" in the quantum field. This connection can lead to changes on many levels, as well as, information, bread crumbs if you will, pointing to other helpful information or events. The quantum field would not appear to be limited by the physical laws of cause and effect reflected in the universe as we experience it, which can allow otherwise inexplicable change to occur.

The client's connection with the quantum field is facilitated, helping to bring change into their being as currently appropriate. While the person receiving quantum healing need not necessarily "believe" in the process, a desire and willingness to change do appear to be requisite components to a successful healing session. This is not always an easy place to be, but the benefits can be extraordinary for many who experience this modality.

Steven works out of Crofton with a flexible schedule and is also willing to travel to your home, or your favourite spot in nature. In-house sessions and distance sessions are also available. Steven also believes in the right to universal healthcare, and offers his services on a sliding scale for those with financial challenges.

Steven can be reached at 604 874-1369



COMMUNITY RALLIES TO LIFT LOCAL NEWSPAPER, TURNING SABOTAGE INTO SOLIDARITY

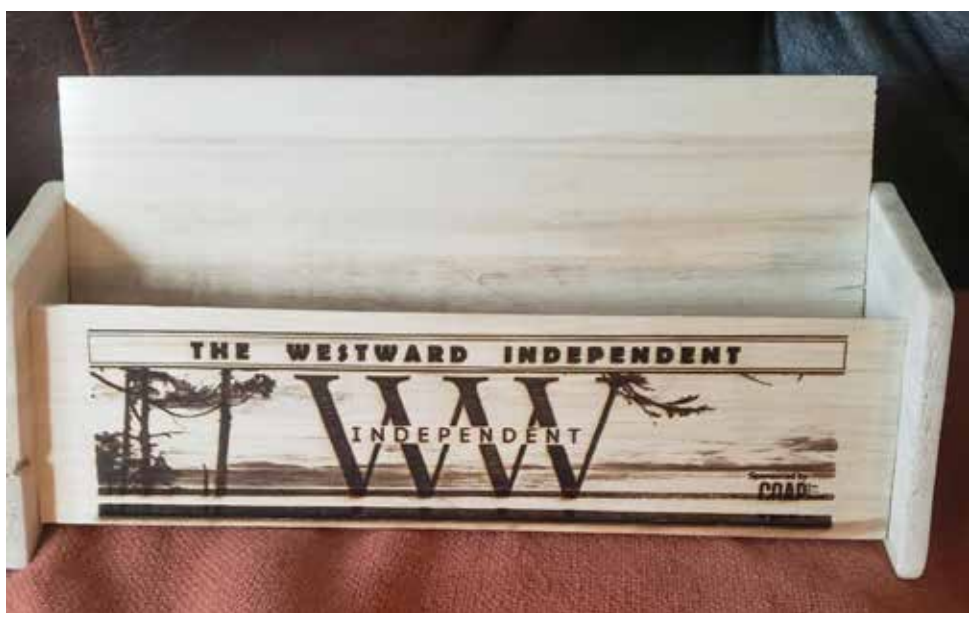


When our humble local newspaper started facing some sly tactics from a competitor, it became a real test of our community's grit and resilience. It's a story that's going to stick with me for a long time, a testament to what real teamwork and local spirit can do.

It all began with our newspaper stands disappearing. These weren't anything fancy, just simple plastic holders we'd put in stores, filled with the latest edition of our hard work. We kept replacing them, not realizing that a rival was actually trashing them to put their own publication in place. It felt like a slap in the face, the kind of sneaky move that goes against everything we stand for.

But, as they say, every cloud has a silver lining. The community's response to this was something out of a feel-good movie. People on Facebook began sharing stories about seeing our papers being tossed out. That's when we knew we had to do something different.

Enter Paul O'Rorke, a community Elder a down to earth community minded citizen who asked for he could help us be making us stands from the pallets our papers came on . We were very pleased as we would rather not keep purchasing plastic stands. He transformed the pallet wood into beautiful table top stands and used his home made laser burner for the logos.



They transformed those old pallets into the most incredible newspaper stands you've ever laid eyes on. This wasn't just about craftsmanship; it was about sending a message – you don't mess with our community. And the stands, they were a work of art.

Then along came Brian Edgar, a talented carpenter, and Ben a community member and metal worker. Brian crafted two beautiful standalone stands. and handed then over to Ben who cut out a metal brand and burned the brand into the stands, resulting in beautiful West Coast vibe.

What this whole episode showed me is that we're more than just a bunch of individuals; we're a community in the truest sense. We're a group of hardworking, traditional folks – the kind who value honesty, a day's work, and looking out for one another. And when someone tries to play dirty, they end up bringing us closer together.

To the competitor who thought they could undermine us – thanks. You tried to knock us down, but all you did was show us how strong and united we are. In your attempt to silence us, you ended up amplifying our collective voice.

To Ben, Paul, Brian, and everyone who lent a hand, I can't thank you enough. You've turned a challenge into a shining example of our community's spirit. These stands are more than just upcycled wood and metal; they're a testament to what we stand for – resilience, unity, and the unbeatable spirit of our town.

We're not just a newspaper; we're a reflection of the people in our community – hardworking, resourceful, and always ready to stand up for what's right. And that, my friends, is something you can't put a price on.

If you would like something beautiful crafted for yourself from Brian Edgar, please reach out to him at 250-510-3795

Brian, with over 30 years of experience in carpentry, specializes in creating aesthetically pleasing woodwork, ranging from gazebos to decks. We are immensely proud of his craftsmanship and his commitment to the community.

With thanks,

Joseph & Adrienne