THE WESTWARD INDEPENDENT

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ISSUE 9



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AN OPEN LETTER TO COWICHAN VALLEY ELECTED OFFICIALS

COMMUNITY CALLS FOR ACTION BEYOND PROVINCIAL OVERREACH

The fire that ravaged the Good Neighbours thrift store on February 10 has reignited a critical debate in Cowichan Valley, not just about homelessness and public safety, but about the role of local governance in navigating federal and provincial policies that directly impact our streets.

The controversy surrounding Safe Injection Facilities (SIFs) without community consent underscores a broader issue: the necessity for local municipalities to use their voices without shirking from worries of larger government push back as the he face of provincial or federal directives that may not align with community values or safety.

The establishment of SIFs has been touted as a step forward in addressing the opioid crisis, yet the implementation process has failed completely, with BC breaking records in opioid deaths each year. Legislation such as the Federal Bill C-37, states by law that community and local government must agree with the SIF in their community, yet both voiced strongly their opposition to the SIF by the schools, which illustrates a troubling trend of local voices being sidelined.



Good Neighbours Thrift Store - WWIND Photo

This situation is a call for Cowichan Valley's elected officials to step up and actively engage with the tools at their disposal to advocate for policies that reflect the community's needs and safety concerns. The 87% surge in crime in early 2023, juxtaposed against the backdrop of these policy debates, lays bare the urgent need for a reassessment of our approach to public health and safety measures at all levels of government.

Among those most affected by the current state of affairs are individuals like a 60-year-old woman living on the streets, who shared her sad reality. Her reliance on the now-destroyed thrift store for basic necessities, paints a vivid picture of the daily struggles faced by the homeless population. "Without access to such resources, surviving out here becomes even more difficult," she reflects, highlighting the immediate human cost of the broader policy and social failures and what the Thrift store meant and provided to that community. It's not just about the abstract principles of public health or community autonomy; it's about real people, living in precarious situations, whose lives and well-being are directly impacted by the decisions of their elected representatives that have failed miserably for the greater community, and those more vulnerable.

The message to our local officials is clear: doing nothing is not an option. The community is watching, waiting for decisive action that moves beyond political expedience and addresses the urgent needs of its most vulnerable members but also the safety of our community, and our children. Kicking the can down the road, mired in political calculations, leaves our community unsafe, unsupported, and divided.

The time for action is now. Our elected officials must leverage the legislative tools at their disposal, which may not be many, but none have been daring enough to press the case of the potentially illegal act of Island Health that placed the SIF in an area, that no locals agreed upon , and potentially breached a federal bill . While tax payers dole out more money for these failed initiatives through federal, provincial, and municipal taxes, they have become weary and expect local leaders and politicians to become the advocates that are proactive, responsive, and unafraid to stand up for the well-being and safety of all its residents

- Joseph

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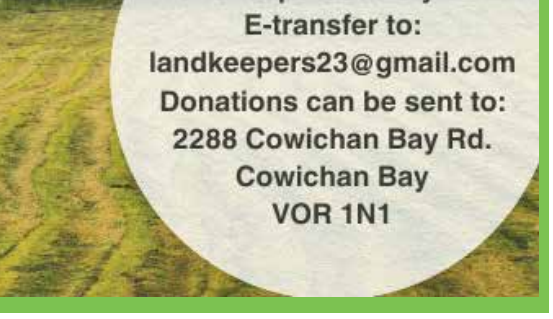
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PARENTS QUESTIONING THE SYSTEM

I am writing anonymously because cancel culture is so prevalent these days. Despite having thick skin, I worry that my child might suffer at the hands of ultra-"progressive" and "inclusive" teachers if I were to identify him.

Have you ever watched a School Board meeting? It mainly consists of board members discussing the events they attended, emphasizing their progressiveness, and engaging in a lot of self-congratulation. The reality within schools starkly differs from their self-congratulatory behavior, with abysmal literacy rates, extremely low attendance rates, and rampant mental health issues, highlighting where the current system's priorities lie.

Here's an interesting fact: children are informed in Grade 8 that they cannot fail grades 8 or 9. How motivating is that for children who already don't particularly enjoy school? Not much, which is why you see so many children roaming the streets during school hours—why attend when it doesn't matter?

But the most significant issue in schools goes beyond this. The woke mind-virus infiltrates nearly every class. Teachers accept sub-par work, assign projects that discourage critical thinking, and guide children toward a specific way of thinking while presenting it as a 'choice.' For example, my child had to choose a social justice category from a list including 'defund the police,' 'BLM,' 'anti-colonialism,' 'me too,' 'LGBTQ,' and more. The instructions were to research the movements and create a poster 'selling' the chosen movement. In another assignment, children were told to research a topic but only use "trusted news sources" like CBC, CTV, BBC, and GLOBAL, restricting their information sources and telling them what is to be deemed "trusted". Another project involved watching a propaganda-filled, shocking video depicting the end of the world in 2024 with civil war, starving children, and climate catastrophes—five minutes that would unsettle even an adult, to what end? In an English class, meant for grades 11/12, children were taught basic language skills like capitalizing sentences and using commas !! The same class primarily focuses on First Nations stories, not out of interest of the child, but because it's mandatory for graduation to take one First Nation themed course. These stories don't celebrate the culture's lives and rich traditions; instead, they focus on portraying the 'evil' actions of the 'white man.' The class lacks reflection on the ongoing government control over the First Nations and ALL its citizens nor encourages comparisons to past and present brainwashing and demands for conformity in schools Many classes emphasize issues happening elsewhere and climate change, topics over which children have no control, leading to increased depression and hopelessness. The school now promotes certain agendas, creating eco-warriors who fear the imminent end of the world, confusing children about their gender, and burdening 'white-presenting' children with guilt for actions they never committed. Few classes instill hope, inspiration, or critical thinking, despite the schools preaching 'tolerance' and 'acceptance.' Don't let the 300 multi-colour flags in the school that are supposed to represent 'tolerance', 'inclusion', 'diversity' fool you. In reality, they only practice these traits if the child conforms to the 'correct' way of thinking. Many children admit to telling teachers what they want to hear on assignments, even if they don't believe what they turn in. Instead of learning practical life skills like taxes, children are exposed to the belief system that says that the world is filled with racism, bigotry, hate, and climate disasters, forcing them to pick a side: 'helpless victim' or 'guilt-filled oppressor.' Is it any wonder that youth mental health continues to decline?

Questioning the need for the current education system father.

CHASING TRENDS OVER TENDING TOWNS

Are our local elected officials more interested in chasing trends than tending to our community's needs?

If you've followed any of the debates in our House of Commons, you'll know exactly what we're referencing in this article. The past few months have brightened the meetings into something closer resembling late-night TV. Even complete with ejections from the house, as Conservative MP Damien Kurek experienced after calling our Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, a liar. When given the option to apologize, MP Damien Kurek stood by his words and was subsequently asked to leave for the day.

As our political arena crosses into the fame and glamour of social media and viral shorts, this popularizing of off-the-cuff politics is making its way to our local municipality. The pursuit of popularity seems to be almost as popular as dragging the climate lens into every council meeting. But what about those who hold differing views or have concerns that fall outside the currently favoured narratives? It's become evident that conservative or right-leaning voices are often sidelined or dismissed. Our local council has made it abundantly clear that the future belongs to climate change agendas and little else.

In the quest for relevance, our councillors have immersed themselves in a whirlwind of coalitions, memberships, and affiliations with various organizations. It's as if they are part of an exclusive club, hobnobbing with the elite, all while our community faces mounting challenges. The weight of resolving local concerns is falling onto the shoulders of compassionate volunteers who now fill the gaps of misaligned local elected officials.

The realities on the ground paint a stark contrast to the council's focus on external recognition. Inflation is taking its toll, with skyrocketing rent and mortgages causing anxiety for many residents. Nearby cities have earned the dubious distinction of being ranked as the most expensive places to live in all of Canada. Meanwhile, wages are struggling to keep pace with the rising cost of living, leaving our community feeling the strain of economic hardship.

It's time for a reality check. Our small town council and mayor should be champions of the core issues that affect us directly. Permit approvals, road maintenance, water and sewer systems, and taxes are the nuts and bolts of local governance. These are the matters that shape our everyday lives, and our elected officials should make them a priority.

Instead, we find ourselves subjected to discussions about global initiatives and international agendas. The focus has shifted so far beyond our community that it often feels like our local leaders have forgotten their fundamental responsibilities.

It's time to remind them of their role. Municipal councillors and mayors are not Hollywood celebrities or global influencers. Their primary duty is to serve the best interests of our town and its residents. We shouldn't have to endure lengthy speeches about international affairs during our council meetings when there are pressing local issues that demand attention.

So, what can we do? It's incumbent upon us, the residents, to hold our elected officials accountable. We must demand that they refocus their efforts on the essentials of local governance. We can start by asking them tough questions about how they plan to address the challenges we face daily – the housing crisis, economic disparities, and the rising cost of living.

Our small town deserves priority on our well-being over the pursuit of trends and acclaim. Let's remind them that their primary responsibility is to tend to our community's needs and work tirelessly to make it a better place for all of us. It's time to put our small town first and leave the Hollywood dreams and global aspirations behind.

- Staff





For the first time in my life, I find myself writing as a candidate for a political party.

I have thrown my hat in the ring for the Conservative Party of BC in the newly-created riding of Juan de Fuca-Malahat, which includes Cobble Hill, Shawnigan Lake, and Malahat down to Metchosin and Sooke.

How is it possible that I, a family physician who has largely avoided politics, am running for office?

I must be dreaming...

Like many, I used to live comfortably in my small bubble. Until one day, some years ago when my bubble burst. During the COVID lockdowns, some government policies stopped making sense. When small businesses were being destroyed, when drug use deaths spiked, and the health care system was crumbling before my eyes. At first, I felt bewildered, then worried, then scared, and in the end, defeated. But then came determination. I was determined to make a difference! Getting back into my bubble was not an option. It did not exist anymore.

How could I make a difference? It took some time to figure it out as the problems were everywhere: the economy, industry, housing, education, healthcare, and societal division.

After thinking long enough and tracking down the problem deep enough, I started seeing where it all stemmed from, the government. Common sense will tell you that the solution will be there too.

If you want to make a difference, just do it. That was simple. But what party to run for? The answer was even simpler. Of course, I would run for the party that up until a year ago, practically did not exist.

In BC, the NDP, the Greens and BC United have practically indistinguishable policies that will only lead to the degradation of our province.

Upon reading the ideas of the Conservative Party of BC, I discovered with great surprise that I was a conservative! Before that day I thought that I was deeply liberal, but the liberals I knew were gone.

I have a good role model: MLA John Rustad, the leader of the Conservative Party of BC. Rustad resurrected this party from the ashes and showed us that nothing is impossible if you are determined enough. John was an MLA for the

BC Liberals for 20 years. One day, he went against the party line on climate change and was forced to leave the BC Liberals (now known as BC United). He could have retired and relaxed, but he was not ready to give up. He chose to fight, and people followed him.

Who is the Conservative Party of BC? We are everyday people with real lives, real jobs, and real families, all worth fighting for. When you look at Conservative candidates, you will not find career politicians. You will find people who left the comfort of their living rooms and went into politics.

The Conservative Party of BC is independent of the federal Conservative Party. What this means is that provincial policy will be determined by the needs of British Columbians, not by Ottawa.

As an MLA, this will give me the ability to make the changes for our community that we want to see and to have a voice in provincial matters.

I am entering a brave new world here. They say three lefts don't make a right, but evidently, three lefts will make a former liberal become a conservative candidate in BC's 2024 election.

** Authorized by Dave Larocque, Financial Agent, davelaro@shaw.ca **







THE NEW CLIMATE PROXY

Much of the U.S. was frosted and frozen by bitter winter weather last week. But this is just further proof of manmade global warming, the media claim.

Because even as America freezes, "most of the rest of the world is feeling unusually warm weather," which is merely a "contradiction" that "fits snugly in explanations of what climate change is doing to Earth," says the Associated Press. Of course what doesn't fit "snugly" is ignored. And there's plenty of that. For instance, [all the right people have assured us for decades] that Arctic ice will disappear due to man's wanton combustion of fossil fuels.

At a United Nations climate conference in 2009, Al Gore, always a gushing font of climate disinformation, said polar scientists had told him, according to CBS News, "that the latest data 'suggest a 75% chance the entire polar ice cap will melt in summer within the next five to seven years.' " A couple of months earlier [in 2009], the BBC reported that "the Arctic Ocean could be largely ice-free and open to shipping during the summer in as little as 10 years," basing this statement on the word of Peter Wadhams, a University of Cambridge "top polar scientist." But the reality is that in the middle of January 2024, "Arctic sea ice for this date stands at its highest level in 21 years," says Climate Change Dispatch. No, it's not summer. It's the dead of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. But this peak arrived immediately after Earth went through the "hottest" year on record. (It's a meaningless claim, as our friend from Junk Science Steve Milloy has shown.) How could Arctic ice be so healthy after a year that was so warm we'd guess from all the media and political fuss that it broke thermometers all over the world? Furthermore, Arctic ice levels for the summer months of 2023 don't show enough of a difference from the long-term averages to be alarmed.

Another fear that is supposed to paralyze us – as well as convince us to surrender our liberties and dollars to the mountebanks who promise they can tame our savage climate – is the loss of land to the rising seas caused by global warming. The world's biggest (and of course most important) cities, and the elites' favorite tropical vacation spots, are on track to be flooded. (Didn't Barack Obama's very presence in the White House fix this)? But reality and the global warming script simply aren't in sync. Or as Roger Pielke Jr., a University of Colorado environmental studies professor, puts it, there's "a large gap between narratives promoted in the media and real-world evidence." Pielke writes that "From 1985 to 2015 – a period when global sea levels increased by about 60 millimeters (about 2.4 inches) – the areal extent of global coastal land increased by almost 34,000 square kilometers (about 13k square miles), or about the size of Belgium, home to more than 11 million people." The additional terrain is due to "'landification,' or the emergence of new land area," he says. He cites a team of Dutch researchers who have "warned that popular anecdotes can present a misleading picture of global trends in changes in the Earth's surface from land to water and vice versa." The researchers argue that "general conclusions cannot be drawn from a limited sample of case studies." Rather, "planetary-scale monitoring is" necessary if we are "to understand (and disentangle) the causes of detected changes and their attribution to natural variability, climate change or man-made change."

Everything that proceeds from the mouths of the climate alarmists must be taken with a boxcar of salt. Truth has long been a casualty in their war on fossil fuels.

WRITTEN BY I&I EDITORIAL BOARD ON JAN 24, 2024. Climatedispatch.com

MYTH OF STOLEN LAND

As we see drastic changes to legislation provincially and federally, based around a United Nations Declaration, people are left confused, both Natives and non-Natives.

Letters have been sent from rowing clubs to their members stating that they hear the docks will be given over at the end of March, Marinas being handed over, farmland flooded by NGO's pinky-promising First Nations areas to harvest long-lost food from, Albertans holding meetings as they watch local councils pass bylaws of expropriation of land, and on and on. There is a blogger who lives on the West Coast who has written about the book 'Not Stolen' and written her opinion on the topic. Here are a few excerpts from that blog.

"We can't grow because of all the regulations placed upon us. Every year a new damned cause, mitigating carbon emissions in the most treed jurisdiction in the world has doubled, even tripled the cost of housing in the past ten years. There are so many people on the streets, they are being offered early state-sponsored death. And of course Indians. The Land Back movement is building because no one contests it. What it means is that Indians (read the hard left) are demanding the "return" of coastal property worth tens, if not hundreds of millions, free of charge. Because: stolen."

"Racism is the most poisonous accusation that anyone can throw at an enemy and the left uses it liberally." "Of the thousands of people I know, fewer than five have been to a reserve or reservation, eaten in an Indian house, been invited to sit in council. Why? They are the worst places in the civilized world. It's like going into a desperate town in Soviet Russia. Grinding poverty, terrible roads, no vegetables, and hopelessness. I have Indian friends with fantastic ideas that they won't get off the ground in a thousand years. This is a direct result of the left's activity, of its ruthless use of native Americans. It didn't used to be like that. Jamie's and my family hold the bloodlines of four indigenous tribes. His eldest son has Metis status, and quite separately, his great grandmother was a full-blood Assiniboine. In the late 1700's, one of my ancestors married into Joseph Brant's Mohawk family, and my great grandmother's cousin was the famous Mohawk poet, Pauline Johnson. My great-aunt married into the Blackfoot. Pauline died of breast cancer in her 50's plus she was broke. My great-grandmother and her friends nursed her through her illness, buried her and erected a statue to her in Vancouver's glorious Stanley Park. Does all that sound racist to you? Indians, 100 years ago, were part of our world. They walked in and out of our houses. We enjoyed their presence, we had Indian friends, partners, family. Now they are immured in reserve-prisons, created by the worst political operators on earth. Why? The foul stinking poison of the left. Wherever they win, they inflict misery, poverty and death.

"I don't know whether you know Indians, been on their reserves in their houses, or have sat in council, but they are the sweetest people I've met, kind, empathic, funny as hell and sharp with it. If I were them, I suppose I'd sign onto the Marxist grift, it's possible. But one thin wedge in and your entire world goes to shit. This was their choice: Anglo-Saxon Protestant discipline or Marxist grift. Whatever demagogue in the tribe who muscled his or her way to power and chose Marxist grift determined their present. I know many indigenous trapped by these demagogues."

"It's polluted our culture. Want to start a business? There's the climate grift, the conservation grift, the water shortage grift, the low-cost housing that-is-never-built grift and lastly the Indian grift. The Indians here have to approve your land use. If you say anything against any of this, you cannot build, you cannot operate, you cannot make money. Even if you want to "give back" and develop a low-cost housing neighbourhood."

"The reason your town or county stumbles along, everything ugly and decaying, crappy buildings, roads broken, people living on the streets, drug or alcohol addiction in every family, is because our bureaucracy is trying to bust us back to the stone age, using climate, Indians and social justice."

You can read the full article on Elizabeth Nickson's Substack Jan 20th, 2024 'The Putrid Myth of Stolen Land'

PARKS OR POCKETS: COWICHAN VALLEY'S QUEST TO GROW TREES AND SHRINK WALLETS

Amidst a whopping 19.33% increase in taxes, residents plan to protest outside the CVRD building on Ingram St, Duncan, February 28th, 1:30PM.



The spotlight on the struggle between public goods and the economic realities of residents, especially those in the middle class, has never been more intense. However, beneath the surface of this debate lies a deeper issue—the voices that are missing from the conversation, often belonging to the most affected.

Statistics Canada's 2021 Census data revealed a distressing trend of increasing renter households and those facing unaffordable housing, disproportionately impacting the lower and middle tiers of the middle class. With a 10.9% rise in the Consumer Price Index from May 2021 to April 2023, these families are feeling the squeeze, forced to prioritize the bare essentials over communal enhancements that incur additional tax burdens.

Community advocacy groups, such as the Citizens Oversight and Accountability Project, COAP, have been vocal about the challenges facing the lower/bottom middle class in North Cowichan. They point out a critical gap in civic engagement: many of these individuals, burdened with working multiple jobs and managing family hardships, simply cannot afford the time to attend meetings or participate in surveys. Their absence from public input sessions is not indicative of apathy but a harsh reality of survival. The implication is clear—just because these voices are silent in public forums does not warrant their exclusion from consideration in policy decisions.

On one end, the upper middle class pushes for tax increases to fund community enhancements, viewing such projects as integral to a high quality of life. On the other, the lower middle class faces the stark reality of economic survival, where even a small increase in taxes can tip the balance of their precariously managed budgets.

This divide raises significant questions about the inclusivity of community decision-making processes. Advocacy groups argue that the inability of some community members to engage in these processes does not negate the value of their perspectives. On the contrary, their insights are crucial to ensuring that community policies are reflective of all residents' needs, not just those with the means to participate in the dialogue.

The CVRD's decision to prioritize park acquisitions and the subsequent tax increase serves as a poignant example of the tension between community aspirations and the economic realities of its residents. While parks are undoubtedly valuable, they must be balanced against the immediate needs of families grappling with the cost of living. The stark reality is that tax increases, however well-intentioned, can exacerbate financial hardships, compelling some families to consider leaving the community they love.

In our current governance landscape, it seems our local officials have taken a leaf out of Captain Planet's playbook, with every policy painted in various shades of green. One can't help but wonder if our leadership's GPS is stuck on a single route: Climate Action Highway, with little regard for the scenic byways of Economic Stability, Social Equity, or even Pothole Repair Avenue.

Let's not forget that our community is more than just a case study in environmental stewardship; it's a tapestry woven with diverse needs, aspirations, and yes, even a few challenges that might not make the cut for a thrilling documentary on climate change. The current all-in approach to climate policy might have us believe that our officials are auditioning for the next superhero blockbuster, "The Green Avengers: Endgame," where the final battle is fought with reusable straws and electric scooters.

Let's ponder a radical thought: Could it be possible to save the planet while also paving the streets, supporting local businesses, and ensuring that every resident can afford to keep the lights on? Perhaps it's time for our local governance to explore a novel concept—multitasking.

A community that thrives on all fronts might just be the most sustainable achievement of all. Here's to hoping our future town halls feature a slightly more diversified agenda, lest we find ourselves living in the utopian city of "New Greenopolis," where the air is clean, but the cupboards are bare.

- Joseph

Join the protest:
February 28th, 1:30PM
CVRD Building, Ingram St, Duncan.



POOPGATE: FROM PUBLIC OUTCRY TO SHEEPISH SMILES

Before I returned to operating a dog boarding kennel, I used to work as the office manager at our local animal control office. Early in the week we received a call from one of the lovely ladies from the district of North Cowichan. A distraught and disgusted woman called in to complain about the huge amount of feces on the lawn in front of one of the local apartment buildings in town.

The caller stated, *"It had to be from the same dog because all the poops were the same size"*. She was horrified as she had never seen such a plethora of poops as this, scattered mere steps from the public sidewalk where people had to pass by on a regular basis. Could we go down and investigate?

ACO Dustin heads out to the address, he pulls over and is surprised to see this is one of the nicer apartment buildings on the block. As he approaches, he sees the numerous objects causing the woman much contempt for the unknown vile little creature that deposited them there.

The complainant was there awaiting our arrival. Dustin looks at her, he notices the uniform size of the objects, he bends down and much to her horror, he picks up one of the little brown turds.

"Ma'am," he says, *"these aren't dog feces, this lawn has recently been aerated, they're little lumps of dirt that have been turned over."*

Needless to say, she was feeling a little sheepish, but was relieved to know there wasn't a pathological pooper on her block.

Sue Stockand has recently taken over Zoomies Boarding kennel and plans to expand with a doggie daycare in the near future. Watch for the upcoming announcement!

Zoomies
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COUNCIL WATCH

SOMEONE'S ALWAYS WATCHING...

IT'S US, WE'RE WATCHING.

North Cowichan

February 2024: North Cowichan wrapped up their budget debates and got a taste of Bill 44

The 2024 budget was accepted with Cllr. Findlay, and Cllr. Manhas in opposition to the 5.18% increase.

Cllr Manhas opposed the budget from the beginning stating that taxes could be lowered if council would stay in its lane. He stated that the Province is what created the mess that local tax payers are now having to foot the bill for, and that they should be providing the money to fix the issues they brought in (ie safe injection site, transition housing, legalized drugs).Cllr. Manhas went on to state that local taxpayers are now on the hook paying for Restorative Justice, which is a provincial responsibility, and having to hire a social planner for the same reason. Additionally; he stated that the Environmental Department has grown significantly and that taxpayers money that was used for the Climate Action and Energy Fund (CAEF) has given out rebates such as 85k to Cowichan Green Community, even though they just sold their building. Cllr Manhas has repeatedly opposed motions to add tax payer money to CAEF. Staff gave an option to withhold placing more into The CAEF this year that has a reserve of over 800k, adding that by not placing money into that and the Quamichan Lake fund which has 629k reserved fund there would be a good tax reduction for the constituents.

Cllr. Justice acknowledged the tough times local people are having, but praised the staff's work on the budget, and the Mayor for his leadership in cost savings. He then justified the increase in taxes by stating that other areas were similar or worse, so "in context we are doing well". Cllr Justice also acknowledged their commitment to 'long term sustainability'

Cllr. Findlay was the last councilor to speak on the budget stating that he really did not care what other municipalities and regional districts were doing tax wise, and was disappointed in the increase. He stated that staff did well presenting options, but the councilors could have done better, to "tighten our belts", and 'put some things on the shelf'.

CVRD

February 2024 CVRD Faced upset farmers and citizens, raised taxes significantly, and increased the park acquisition fund.

The road outside the CVRD saw many tractors slow-rolling past the building until they came to a stop in front of a large crowd of people who had come to support their message and bring their own to the Board members. The Board was asked by Nature Trust to send a letter to the Agricultural Land Commision to help them with proceeding forward in the flooding of almost 200 acres of farmland in Cowichan Bay. Previously one could bring requests directly to the ALC, but in 2020 the rules changed and you now have to go through local government first. Land Keepers Society, COAP Inc, and other concerned citizens filled up the half-hour time limit allocation for public feedback.

The Board had the choice to do as Nature Trust had asked, or not. Without really any debate Director Nicholson was the first to jump on 'calling the question' (bringing it to a vote). The Board voted to follow the request of Nature Trust. The crowd was visibly upset, as were the Farmers still sitting outside.

The following meeting in the CVRD saw the drastic increase to taxes get the go-ahead, as elected members lamented the hard times of their constituents but ultimately residents in the CVRD area will see a tax increase of nearly 20%. Area Director McGonigle stated "I will find it difficult to mention to my community who has a median income of $35k-$42.6k of the decision we did make", while Mayor Douglas brought 30x30 into the discussion as if it were a voted-on initiative, which it is not, just another United Nations initiative to 'protect' 30% of water and 30% land by 2030 - that apparently the CVRD residents must pay for part of.

17 YEARS OF NORTH COWICHAN



PHOTO: TRAILER INTERIOR - 'MS FELLOWS'

In our recent interviews in North Cowichan, the family behind this narrative prefers to remain anonymous—a reflection of a prevailing apprehension among many to share their stories, fearing potential repercussions from North Cowichan.

Some of these individuals, in their 70s, recount experiences spanning five decades, detailing the municipal actions that have led to the loss of their land, suffering, and financial setbacks and in this story, their home. For the sake of clarity, the owner of the trailer will be referred to as Ms. Fellows, and the property owner as Mr. Singh.

This story unfolds over two decades ago when a family decided to acquire a trailer on leased land. The trailer had been on the property since 1973, and Ms. Fellows became the fourth owner of this abode. However, due to the property owner, Mr. Singh, having the trailer on his land, the value of the property diminished, labeled as "trailer park" status by the municipality, a status known to North Cowichan from the outset.

Despite the reduced value, the family, with a carpenter among them, invested significant time and money in transforming the trailer into a remarkable home. They reveled in making the trailer an extraordinary dwelling and enjoyed harmonious years there, building a good relationship with Mr. Singh and creating their own piece of paradise.

The ordeal commenced when, after seven years, Ms. Fellows decided to sell the trailer to facilitate the purchase of a property for her and her husband to build a small home. A real estate agent informed North Cowichan about the sale, expressing reluctance due to the absence of necessary permits. Initially, North Cowichan claimed the trailer should never have been there and, despite all hookups being in place for years, owners paying taxes, having a legal address, all hookups, and the trailer being occupied by different owners since the '70s. The Real Estate agent then took the listing off the MLM within three days of speaking with North Cowichan. Subsequently, North Cowichan sent a letter to Mr. Singh, acknowledging awareness of another trailer, not the one being sold, and stating, "the problem being that there was no record of any permit being issued to the site this mobile home sat on." Later, North Cowichan admitted knowledge of the trailer's 30-year history and proposed an initial "solution" of $350 for a letter of "comfort," essentially giving a grandfather clause to the trailer. While Ms. Fellows considered this a fair price and was willing to pay, North Cowichan insisted that Mr. Singh foot the bill. Upon Mr. Singh's refusal, North Cowichan intensified its stance, serving both Mr. Singh and Ms. Fellows with an expensive list of requirements to fulfill for the trailer's sale. These demands included verifying the wiring to meet specific standards, obtaining a "Silver Sticker," provincial approval and verification of the septic system, and commissioning a legal survey detailing the home's location and any outbuildings.

In an attempt to understand the circumstances surrounding their trailer's sale, Ms. Fellows sought the paperwork from their original Real Estate agent. She was rudely dismissed, refused the paperwork, and was informed that she would have to take the agent to court if they wished to obtain it. Ms. Fellows reached out to numerous law firms between Duncan and Courtney, only to find that most were on retainer from North Cowichan. Eventually, Ms. Fellows and her family had their day in court. Upon arrival, they witnessed the Real Estate agent in the hall, engaged in hugging and laughter with the judge—an apparent familiarity between them. Initially told that no one else could be present in the courtroom, the judge allowed 15 people with the agent. The proceedings were brief, with the judge addressing Ms. Fellows, stating, "I can't understand your paperwork, YOU didn't do your due diligence". Ms. Fellows asked "what is the Real Estate agent for then?". The judge summarily dismissed the case. Subsequently, when Ms. Fellows attempted to obtain the stenographer's notes from the trial, to show this statement by the judge in further litigations, she was denied access to the transcripts and threatened with a fine of $5000 for both she and her husband.

Undeterred, Ms. Fellows embarked on the expensive journey to sell, paying $5000 for the 'Silver Sticker' for their electrical system. One day, upon returning home, she discovered their sewer pipes had been dug up, down to the effluent discharge caps on the pipes, which were now leaching sewer into the surrounding areas. A neighbour revealed that a N.C. truck had been there earlier, seen digging up the pipes. The owners later discovered that jurisdiction over sewer issues lay with Island Health, leaving them bewildered as to why N.C. was interfering with their sewer and demanding an inspection as part of the 'to-do' list.

Despite the trailer's charm, inquiries from potential buyers dwindled due to the complications surrounding the sale, and the inability to obtain anything in writing from the Municipality. Ms. Fellows sought multiple appraisals, valuing the trailer at around $155k, but bureaucratic obstacles obstructed any potential sale.

Meanwhile, the owner of the land, Mr. Singh, passed away, and his sister, Mrs. Daily, assumed property rights. She then delegated day-to-day dealings to an affluent property management company. At this juncture, North Cowichan declared that the trailer could neither be moved nor sold. When Ms. Fellows was offered $50k for the trailer, after initially asking for $200k, by the firm handling the sale of the land, she was given six months to clear the land and return it to its 'original' agricultural status, with the final $25k to be received after inspection. The conditions included digging up the driveway, among other tasks, which Ms. Fellows did not undertake. An Inspector gave her the all-clear, shaking his head at the idea of removing the driveway as a condition. Subsequently, the purchaser of the trailer, who lived on a local First Nations Reserve, hired Belton Brothers to move the trailer to the Reserve. However, when it came time to move, the moving company refused to do so without an asbestos inspection. Ms. Fellows paid $1000 for the inspection, and finally, after 17 years of stress, litigation, and thousands of dollars spent on 'improvements,' the trailer left the property.

Ms. Fellows estimates her losses at $140k, not including labour for the trailer upgrades or the expenses incurred while complying with municipal demands. As a final affront, North Cowichan demanded $875 and a liability waiver, which she refused to sign or pay for. Homeless, Ms. Fellows purchased an $8000 trailer for herself and her family, only to discover later that trailer parks do not permit trailers over 10 years old to have permanent residence. Consequently, she now moves between different friends' properties, as North Cowichan prohibits owners of these properties from having anyone live permanently in a trailer on their premises.

And so, the story unfolds of a family, still grappling with homelessness to this day—a poignant reminder of the challenges faced by individuals ensnared in the intricate web of bureaucratic red tape, while North Cowichan placates the public with their 'concerns' around housing needs.

The opinions expressed in this article belong solely to "Ms. Fellows."



NUT BAR CHRONICLES: TAX SCHEMES, AND PUTIN'S PRIME-TIME BEAM



Photo: WWIND file photo

Welcome back to the Nut Bar, where the satire is as thick as Canadian maple syrup and just as sweetly biting. We find ourselves navigating a veritable smorgasbord of political paradoxes, from the local landscapes of Cowichan Valley to the international stage, where the dance of diplomacy and disinformation unfolds with all the grace of a moose on a tightrope.

In the serene yet ever-surprising Cowichan Valley, the CVRD has concocted a plan that's as bewildering as finding a beaver in your bathtub. Despite the collective belt-tightening of their constituents, our local luminaries have deemed it wise to hike taxes by a staggering 19.33%, all in the name of expanding green spaces. It's a move as audacious as serving poutine at a vegan banquet, leaving many to wonder whether their councilors are visionaries or just plain verdant.

But as we chuckle and chafe at local fiscal follies, the world stage presents its own theater of the absurd. Enter the scene: a controversial interview that's turned more heads than a Mountie in full regalia at an international parade. Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a spectacle that could rival any Shakespearean drama, sat down with Tucker Carlson, bringing the global spotlight to Canada in a manner as unexpected as a snowstorm in July.

Putin's critique of Canadian applause for an ex-Nazi, amidst the hallowed halls of Parliament, has thrown a spotlight on the delicate dance of history, memory, and politics. It's a narrative twist that's as shocking as finding a loonie in a Russian nesting doll, leaving Canadians and the international community alike grappling with the implications. This incident, served up with a side of international intrigue, has the flavor of a political poutine—messy, complex, and undeniably Canadian.

As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau counters with the diplomatic equivalent of a hockey check, assuring that Canadians won't be duped by Russian propaganda, we're reminded that the political rink is slippery and the pucks of public opinion are hard to control. It's a reminder that in the great game of politics, sometimes you're the skater, and sometimes you're the ice.

And so, as we look toward the fall, with the leaves turning and the election looming like a long shadow at sunset, Cowichan Valley's citizens find themselves pondering a future painted in shades of green and tinged with the hues of political uncertainty. The tax hike for parks, once a local quirk, now feels like a microcosm of the global balance—where the environment, history, and the hard truths of governance collide.

As the curtain falls on this month's edition of the Nut Bar, let's raise our glasses (filled with local craft brew, of course) to the resilience of the Cowichan spirit, the complexity of Canadian identity, and the unending comedy of the political sphere. For in the end, whether we're dealing with tax hikes or international incidents, a healthy dose of satire might just be the maple syrup that helps the medicine go down.

Stay tuned, stay skeptical, and above all, stay smiling. After all, in the unpredictable theatre of life and politics, the next act is always just around the corner.

- Joseph

Tuna Poke Bowl

Serves 2



Ingredients for bowl:
1 cup cooked edamame beans
1 cup diced cucumber
1 cup grated carrot
1 cup diced mango
1 avocado diced
1/2 cup sliced green onion
1 sheet nori (julienned)
2 tbsp wasabi
Put ingredients off to the side until plating except avocado, dice right before platting to help from browning.

Marinated tuna:
2 cups diced ahi tuna
1 cup soya or tamari for gluten free
2 tbsp sesame oil
1 tbsp sriracha
2 tbsp grated ginger
2 tbsp lime juice
2 tbsp rice wine vinegar
1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
Mix all ingredients in a bowl and lightly toss. Let sit at least 1-2 hours.



Sriracha mayo:
1 cup of mayo
1 tbsp rice wine vinegar
1-2 tbsp sriracha
2 tbsp lime juice
Pinch of salt
Mix all ingredients together then add to a small ziplock bag, you can then cut one end to use it as a pipping bag.

Rice:
4 cups cooked sushi rice or any white rice will do
4 tbsp rice wine vinegar
1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp sugar
While the rice is cooking you can whisk together the vinegar, salt and sugar. When the rice is cooked and still warm add the vinegar mixture and fold gently into the rice. Careful not to over mix or your rice will be mushy.

Put it all together:
Add 2 cups of the rice to the middle of your bowl or plate. Add 1/2 cup of the edamame beans, carrot, cucumber and mango. Then add 1 cup of the marinated tuna to the middle as it's the star of the show. Add a drizzle of your sriracha mayo. Then top it off with the green onion, toasted sesame seeds, nori and a little wasabi for a kick.

Hope you enjoy this beautiful healthy dish. With the fresh fish, ginger and all these fresh veggies and fruit this is a great way to feel good about what you're eating and stay healthy.

Chef Eron / Eron Gaskell

My passion for cooking came at an early age. My Grandmother and mother are amazing cooks and had me helping in the kitchen at 8 years old. I was fortunate to travel to many different countries including Malaysia where my family is from. Through my travels and experiences I have learned many different styles of cooking but especially love Thai, Indian and Malaysian cuisine.
Some of my favourite places I have worked at are The Waterstreet Cafe in Vancouver, Gastehaus in Peachland and I had my own restaurant in Costa Rica called Bar Arriba.
I am passionate about good wholesome food and look forward to sharing some of my favourite recipes with you. Bon Appetite

CONTROVERSIAL LAND USE AMENDMENTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Province is quietly asking for public feedback on their amendments to the Land Use Act. They are asking for written submissions, no longer than five pages with no website links, no spam, and no profanity. Write to LandActamendments@gov.bc.ca by March 31st 2024.

Even the most fervent NDP supporters have expressed their concern for how this is being pushed through so quickly, without public engagement, or lower level of government's feedback.

What is the BC NDP looking to change in the Act? In essence, the NDP are proposing an amendment that removes the power of the Ministry to have sole decision-making over Crown land after consultation with Indigenous groups. Decisions such as on leases that cover grazing, water/power projects, land used for logging, and other resources using Crown Land. This amendment will now give Indigenous groups veto power over land tenures and leases of all Crown land - though this point has been down played, from the vague update the public is allowed to see, and the talking heads promoting the amendment. Previously, land lease agreements would be approved by the Minister of Lands. This Act will change the governing of 95% of the province's land that is currently Crown land.

These proposed amendments extend beyond the rulings of the Supreme Court of Canada, which are grounded in the acknowledgment of Aboriginal rights outlined in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Despite the Supreme Court affirming certain special rights for Indigenous groups such as the right to be consulted in decisions impacting them, it consistently emphasizes that these groups do not possess a veto over Crown land decision-making. The question arises: why is the NDP in British Columbia considering granting such significant authority to Indigenous groups, especially when not explicitly supported by Canada's existing recognition of Indigenous rights in the Constitution?

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), was turned down by the Canadian government originally until Justin Trudeau signed onto it. It holds many odd caveats such as 'anyone can claim to be Indigenous', while holding no legal weight, the new amendments to BC's Land Act will in fact ingrain these so-called "rights" into B.C. law. The Federal Government met in consultation behind closed doors around bill C15 in 2020. In Bill C-15 discussions revolved around how to place UNDRIP into a 'whole-of-government' approach to align with the UN declaration, with a few groups recommending "additional wording to clause 4 of the consultation draft in order to give power to the courts to strike down federal laws that are found to be inconsistent with the UN declaration, or to clearly indicate that the UN Declaration would prevail in the event of an inconsistency." A few participants suggested sharing tax revenues generated from resource management projects with Indigenous governments, which is now being put through on a Federal level.

The BC government was the first province to adopt UNDRIP five years ago, which was in essence, a handshake deal, with no legal weight behind the 'sharing' of land use decisions. In order to give legal weight behind said decision-making over Crown land usage, the Province states it is asking "To seek input on a proposal to enable the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) agreements with Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) for Land Act decisions." And in order to create the legal authority of Indigenous groups: "The Declaration Act does not give legal effect to the decision-making power(s) for an agreement, so amendments are required to the legislation containing the decision-making power(s)."

Currently, after multiple wins in court by First Nations Bands over rights to land, the province is on record encouraging the First Nations to buy out tenure-holders and property owners, and to that end, it has provided some funding "to support acquisition at a fair market value." This is leading to a huge transfer of wealth. BC insists that "there are no secret negotiations — the province is committed to transparency and is in regular contact with stakeholders." Not everyone in the regions currently affected agree, and the government acknowledges receiving "a large volume of correspondence from concerned citizens."

Questions arise that should be discussed and debated well before this amendment is pushed through in the Spring. Questions such as the fact that 80% of grazing land is on Crown land -- will our food chain be disrupted? Will farmers lose any of their grazing land? According to gov.bc.ca "BC is unique in the relatively small percentage of land that is privately owned. This means that access to provincial Crown land is necessary for livestock grazing. Grazing is authorized on Crown rangeland under the Range Act and regulated by the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)."

Will there be transparency and accountability? First Nations governments are not able to be FOI(d) (Freedom of Information Request) by the public, and therefore can participate in back room deals that the public would not be privy to. No matter what race or creed a person is, they can be without morals, or succumb to corruption and greed. Can the public attend First Nations' meetings where these decisions are being made? Can the public have a say as they do now through direct contact with the ministries and public hearings, albeit typically a 'procedural step'?

Will this large shift in governing procedures only benefit the Bands recognized by the Government, many of whom already benefit monetarily from land leases, of which their band members don't often see the benefits of, and who often live in fear of speaking out against a family or the Band government. And how are these Bands recognized to have 'ownership' over areas of lands when First Nations do not believe in owning Mother Nature? It will be called 'stewardship' or the like. Where does democracy fit into this amendment? If the farmers who graze cattle, and the companies that produce resources are given a veto to use the land, in lieu of a Band possibly joining with an outside partner, as current governments do, to whom do the taxpayers go to share their concerns? Is the government, who still can't get clean drinking water to reserves, really having a change of heart, suddenly caring and giving land back to First Nations, or are there other larger global plans in the works that they are using First Nations for?

Australia recently held a referendum on a similar plan based on UNDRIP called 'The Voice'. At least Australia attempted to go through the democratic means with a referendum unlike the NDP who, in the past couple years, have become notorious for slipping through large bills in the time frame of a month ie: Bill 36, 44, 46, 47, 31 etc. According to Paul Kelly, Editor-



at-Large of the Australian newspaper: "The Voice contradicts the principle of equality of citizenship that enshrines and binds together our Nation. The Voice is based on the principle that we have different constitutional rights depending on our ancestry. We need to think about that as a country. And think whether or not we really want that to happen. This is a change in the Constitution that, being realistic, would be forever. What will that mean for the unity of our country?" Racial preference never ends well. Equality of citizenship is fundamental to what it means to live in a democracy." The 'Voice' was defeated by a large margin of over 70% to leave governing as the status quo.

A story was shared with us a few months ago about a local group who was gifted land to build a tiny home village for elders in the community near Mill Bay. Their dream was to create affordable living for retirees, who are in such desperate need for housing these days. After fund-raising for the funds to make applications to the CVRD (who did not give this non-profit a 'deal' on application prices) and having the water availability checked to confirm that there was in fact enough water for this tiny home village, they were then told by the CVRD to ask the Malahat First Nations 'permission' to use this water. Malahat First Nations denied the usage of water, and the whole project unfortunately died with it. Without knowing the reasoning behind the Malahat First Nations' decisions, we can only ask if this was an example of veto power becoming more prominent after the new amendments.

Yet, on the other hand, the Malahat First Nations have just joined with Energy Plug Technologies to create a 100k square foot facility for battery energy storage systems, to be constructed at a 52-acre business park on reserve land adjacent to the Trans-Canada Highway. This facility will be where imported lithium-iron-phosphate battery cells are manufactured into battery storage packs. While Lithium-Iron-Phosphate technologies do not use cobalt, the lithium extraction is extremely damaging to the water and the land where it is extracted from. For example, in Chile's Atacama salt flats, mining consumes, contaminates, and diverts scarce water resources away from local communities. Approximately 2.2 million litres of water is needed to produce one ton of lithium. The production of lithium through evaporation ponds uses a lot of water - around 21 million litres per day. Approximately 2.2 million litres of water is needed to produce one ton of lithium. Governments, regardless of which ones, are hypocrites in the 'green agenda', and prefer to partake in the trillions of dollars in wealth transfer the 'Green Transition' offers, ignoring UNDRIP on one hand when speaking about other Indigenous' lands around the world, but using it as a prop when appropriate locally.

We have written about local governments breaking multiple UNDRIP sections through purchasing electric fleet vehicles, and understand that UNDRIP was never voted on by taxpayers, and is attempting to usurp Canadian Laws. The Land grab by the UN is only just kicking in with agreements signed by Canada such as, '30 by 30', Agenda 2030, Caribou Recovery Act, Sustainable Development agreements and more. These 'goals' can be obtained through legislation such as the Land Amendment, or through Nature Trust and hundreds of other NGOs 'reclaiming' land, based on vague statements such as "protection", "rewilding", "restoration" and the like, as we see with the Cowichan Bay Estuary situation and hundreds of other locations along our coast. Did anyone vote for the United Nations to have a say over how we govern our lands and resources? If the land given back to the 'Indigenous' is not properly cared for or stewarded, the UN states they can come in and take the land into THEIR 'care'.

Excerpts from UNDRIP; "Affirming also that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind"; "Affirming further that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust" - And with that, this declaration asserts that NO peoples are superior to another which most in their right minds would agree to.

It is fascinating how we have seemed to devolve as we strived towards 'progress', away from consulting with actual locals, to hiring well-connected 'consulting firms', from working together in trade and commerce, to dividing people into 'groups' who are then so busy fighting each other they can not share their shared values and dreams for their children, giving up our sovereignty and human rights to corrupt governments believing they 'know what's best' for us. If the people of the tribes, not their government, and the farmers and the rest of the 'salt of the earth' folks, and not the governments, were allowed to actually come together to talk, share, and learn from each other, without the bureaucracy, what a productive and more peaceful life we would live.

www.wwind.ca/landact











Dear WWIND,

Every news media secretly took part in a $61MILLION Trudeau pre-election pay-off from your tax dollars.

When news of this "emergency relief" payout to Canadian media was first leaked out, it was dismissed as "Misinformation", a term the Federal govt. has overused when anyone says anything they don't like. It was, understandably, not mentioned at all in any Main Stream Media (MSM) Newspaper, nor CBC taxpayer-funded news. Nor was it acknowledged when newspapers, such as the Cowichan Citizen, were asked about their "bribe" of $160,292. This money was granted to MSM publishers under the guise of "ensuring that the public received timely information about the upcoming election". Nearly 1,500 news media took the bribe. The total amount paid out is more than $61 Million because this list doesn't include individual reporters, just the companies. The details were obtained from the Federal Govt. when Rebel News filed a Freedom of Information FOI.

Vancouver Island and most BC newspapers are owned by Black Press. On p.3 & 4 of the complete list, you can see that Black Press was given over 5 Million dollars to cover the elections "properly". If YOU received a bribe, might you be inclined to print whatever you were told to print by the briber? Might this news be considered an influence on the election results? Did you agree that the current Liberal government could spend $61 Million of YOUR TAX DOLLARS to ensure they were re-elected?

The Westward Independent, on the other hand, is an independent newspaper supported entirely by readers who want the facts and the truth. In the link below, you can verify the amount of money given to every newspaper in Canada, out of your pocket. Perhaps this is one reason that so many people have lost faith in mainstream media. True journalism can only be seen in independent news sources, which are thankfully on the increase since COVID-19 started. This is a positive outcome, as more people choose to look beyond what they are being fed by a government that seems destined to lower the Canadian standard of living; increase the cost of living, and increase regulations in every aspect of our lives; including free speech, health care, education, food sources, banking, and transportation.

Reference: https://www.rebelnews.com/exclusive_news_media_who_secretly_took_trudeaus_61m_pre-election_pay-off

Lorene

Dear WWIND,

In hopes of keeping Free Speech alive, something we hope our democracy will still honour. We have all been living in very strange times these last four years. In 2020 we were all together with the "Pandemic" looming ahead. Being 'good Canadians' most of us complied with what our Public Health system told us to do.

But then there was a 'great divide' created by the Narrative given to us on all mainstream media. People, doctors, scientists were vilified, and ostracized, for asserting any opinions that differed from the Narrative. Did you not find that a bit odd? Only one opinion or belief was allowed. This does not sound very scientific to me. Science is supposed to be a continual discussion of evidence and proof with differing ideas on the table. Well, this was just not allowed. Many very reputable doctors and scientists lost their jobs just because they dared to question the Narrative. They were concerned about their patient's health, a valid and honourable concern. This great divide harmed many people. Friends and family were pitted against each other, when supporting each other was crucial. All kindness left. A quote by Kahlil Gibran says it well. "Kindness is like snow, it beautifies everything it covers." Perhaps we need more snow? Unfortunately, the divide still exists. Meanwhile in the midst of this people were censored on social media and unable to question anything. The Narrative had to reign supreme. And why did this happen? Follow the money. Big Pharma gives huge buckets of money to government agencies, universities, hospitals, doctors, politicians and public health agencies. They want to ensure that their profits are big and that no one is going to interfere with the sales of their products. If any of these entities want to keep their funding, they have to follow the dictates of Big Pharma. You know the saying, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." We were all told to follow the science, but they never actually gave us any verifiable scientific proof, and we were supposed to take that as the truth. The Narrative given us was pure propaganda. Fear is a commonly used psychological method to get a population to comply with what you tell them. Fear-mongering to keep us all in line. Fear helps suspend one's ability to exercise critical thinking. Critical thinking clearly was not the norm or allowed without being gaslighted, a most despicable behaviour of division.

And then came all the mandates which were based a lot upon modelling, which in fact turned out to be very wrong as time has proved. Over these years much evidence, research, data and intelligent analysis has been gathered. The Lockdown harmed many, businesses lost, school children set back, jobs lost and the horror of not seeing loved ones in care homes and hospitals or attending funerals or gathering in any groups. Sweden did not lockdown and fared no worse than countries that did.

And then came masks. At first Bonnie Henry said they would not help, then she changed her tune and mandated them. I believe they were mostly theatre. Current solid science, not pseudo science, has proven that whether you wear a mask or not, your chances of catching covid or any other virus, is just about the same. There was no treatment protocol for covid allowed except the oh so reverent 'vaccines'. Ivermectin was vilified. Funny thing that it saved many lives where it was used, like India. Also Ivermectin in 2015 received a Nobel prize, being a very good drug with no major side effects. That fact was just buried under the rug. Now, the proverbial rug is getting quite lumpy with so much information stuffed under it. All this because Big Pharma and friends wanted the 'vaccine' to be the saviour. In order for it to be approved on the fast track emergency path, there could not be any other drugs that successfully treated covid. So just vilify any other substances and gaslight people for even thinking of them. This clears the way for all that money to be made on world wide mass vaccinations. Don't forget to follow the money, honey. We were all told the 'vaccines' were 'safe and effective'. Many trusted public health and got the jabs. None got informed consent since we were not informed of any possible problems with the jabs. And now that much time has passed, solid scientific data has come out showing that they were neither safe nor effective. They ended up not stopping transmission or illness. Hum, isn't that what a vaccine is supposed to do? And there have been a huge number of people injured or killed by the 'vaccine', but these facts are just more lumps under the rug. I call that an example of 'disinformation' given to us by public health, government and the media.

But anyone saying anything opposed to the safety of the 'vaccines' was labeled a 'conspiracy theorist' spouting 'misinformation/disinformation' and vilified. FYI, the term 'conspiracy theorist' was popularized by the US CIA for anyone telling truths that the CIA did not want us to know, 'inconvenient truths'. 'Kill the messenger'. Robert Kennedy has been maligned as an anti-vaxxer. If anyone actually ever listened to him, he clearly has stated that he is not against vaccines in general. He and his family had all the vaccinations. He only wants the manufacturers (Big Pharma) to do sufficient safety testing, proving their safety, before rolling them out into people's arms. And the Covid shots did not have all the necessary testing to be really sure they were safe. That is all he is saying and for that he is ostracized. Big Pharma has immunity from any harms from their vaccines. Back to that terrible Divide that has been put upon our society.

We keep hearing about the terrible shortage of doctors and nurses all across Canada, especially BC, which by the way is the only province that still mandates covid shots for health care workers. BC has many who lost their jobs because they did not want to get the 'vaccine'. We could really use them now, but Bonnie Henry and Adrian Dix will not let us. Very illogical. All of my information has been gathered from lots of research looking at solid science (all verifiable), not the pseudo-science we have been fed. We need to heal the Divide for the sake of our country's soul. Will your newspaper help or hinder our recovery? - **Benoit**

Dear WWIND,

"Right now, the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (SECU) is deliberating on Bill S-210, an age verification proposal that could potentially age-gate most of the Internet. Under the guise of protecting young people, this bill proposes implementing an age gate that could require adults to surrender copies of their IDs or scans of their faces to access everyday online platforms, services, and websites. This approach is not only disproportionate but also sets a dangerous precedent for increased online surveillance. " - Watchdog Open Media

To the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security,

Hello, I am writing to this committee to express my concern about S-210. As a user of the internet with more hours than almost anyone, I am not convinced this Bill is productive or good for either the minors it claims to help, or everyone else. This bill attempts to use age verification as a one-size-fits-all to prevent minors from accessing content that is adult. The issues are as follows.

Age verification and Privacy: Verifying the age of a user can be faked, and will be faked by minors. Pretending that using a token for authentication would prevent this is amazingly optimistic and inaccurate. Privacy is impossible when a user is asked to verify who they are, and writing "Data will be destroyed" puts the responsibility of that data security on the government staff. There is not only no trust for anyone who actually works in IT for that statement, but it is childish to place that sort of trust in any government, party, MP, or Senator. Another issue with this is that despite claiming to care about children, this bill will also tie that very same data to users, so once a minor becomes an adult the same data could put them at risk of any number of companies and organizations such as their employer.

Internet Freedom and Personal Responsibility: With this change, there is damage to the integrity of the internet and to the ability of any user to make informed decisions. Other bills have already threatened this same ability by enabling the CRTC to mandate what information is actually true and promote it as news. This bill is no different and in fact, is more than censorship in that it will allow anyone with power to demolish the life of someone else who does not. In order to protect minors from adult content responsible citizens have been using the tried and true method of parenting. The government is at best a terrible, cruel and pathetic parent. This entire issue is parental responsibility, and this bill serves as nothing more than deciding whether citizens should be forced to comply with no privacy from the government or their associates. Personal responsibility is the very fabric of our country, or it used to be when you and I grew up. This is a direct contradiction to everything Canada is supposed to be and is utterly misinformed. As it stands nearly every single adult service has a popup warning minors that they should be of age before they continue. And while this solution is not effective, it is just as effective as the age verification this bill proposes. In direct terms then, neither solution will help the issue because the cause is a disconnect from the family structures that allow a parent to help their child grow into a properly functional but individual adult.

Data Security and Realistic Expectations: This bill made it through the House, which by itself would be shocking if individual MPs didn't have to hire people to manage their online affairs for them. Senators, MPs and nearly all other government officials have little to no understanding of the Internet, freedom of speech on the Internet, data security, networking, basic web technologies, or any other relevant fields. Why would they speak for all Canadians when they can't make a folder on the desktop, can they port forward? Most minors when I was growing up could. Data security is also a massive issue given the obvious corruption of the government and the fact that they are likely to be using systems from 20-40 years ago with many known and tested security flaws. How can any reasonable person expect the data collected to be used for its purpose and only its purpose when any investigations done into wrongdoing are cancelled without action? You can't regulate the internet, because it is every medium, and it is everywhere. Even the great firewall China has can be easily bypassed. Digital IDs are in this same vein, harmful and destructive for the sake of control that is thinly veiled as protection, or convenience. Anyone who knows anything about the internet, its users, the underlying technology, or democracy should be able to see that this bill is not about minors, but rather an excuse to exert more control over the internet to the detriment of everyday citizens.

Thank you for considering my statements as an IT professional.

Dear WWIND,

In the grand theater of modern discourse, where "wokeness" takes center stage, it seems we've all been handed scripts for a drama that many of us didn't audition for. The current production, directed with the best of intentions, no doubt, aims to spotlight social injustices with a zeal that's both admirable and, frankly, a bit overwhelming. But here's the thing: while we're busy acknowledging every privilege under the sun and trying to rewrite history's wrongs, aren't we missing the plot?

Let's not kid ourselves. True progress doesn't come from casting people in roles based on the backstory of their birth. It happens when we celebrate individuals for their character, their hustle, and the unique flavor they bring to the societal potluck. The real strength of our community doesn't lie in divvying up slices of the victimhood pie but in creating a buffet of opportunities where everyone gets a fair shot at serving up their best. Navigating the twists and turns of social justice movements today feels like trying to dance to a song with an ever-changing beat. But here's a radical idea: what if we focused on cranking up the volume on our shared humanity instead? Imagine a world where we're not judged by the color of our skin, the size of our bank accounts, or the history books of our ancestors but by the contributions we make to the big party called life.

So, as we all try to find our steps in this complex dance, let's remember to lead with a little humor, a lot of respect, and a dash of humility. After all, the future we're all striving for—one where every person is valued for what they bring to the table, not the table they were born at—isn't just a pipe dream. It's a party invitation to create a world that's just, equitable, and, dare I say, a whole lot more fun.

Keep it spicy - **Savid Dlade**

Dear WWIND,

I was surprised to see that Police Chief Manak of Victoria spoke concerning people protesting at Dr. Bonnie Henry's documentary and that he was worried about potential violence.

This was a shock because we attended a protest at the Legislature Buildings that had been properly licensed and peacefully attended but had definite violence and frightening aspects to it and the police did nothing about the violent offenders, Police Chief Manak said nothing and the Times Colonist did not report what happened at this protest accurately.

Which protest was this? This was the March4Millions that was organized by parents wanting to protect their children in schools. Where was the violence? From opposition to this protest from government and teacher union thugs and others. These thugs at one point surrounded a group of Muslim parents and children and were screaming in their faces "Go back where you came from!" including racist slurs and expletives over and over again and making extremely aggressive gestures towards them. These same thugs circled the organizers and were so aggressive towards them that the police got between the organizers and the thugs. The police were visibly nervous and concerned for the safety of the organizers. The police told these organizers to pack their things and leave quickly as they were afraid that they could not control these thugs who were progressively moving towards violence. The speakers that had been organized were not allowed to finish speaking. The aggressive thugs won. A blow to democracy in our country. Where were the concerns of the Chief of Police and the Times Colonist then? Why and when has Canada become a "2 Law" Canada?

Sincerely,

John & Carol Money

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS CLASH WITH AGRICULTURAL REALITIES

A few months back Westward Independent featured an article on the Dutch Farmer protests, and they still have not given up; In fact, their voices have been amplified now throughout Europe.

In the first weeks of January, it is estimated that over 2,000 farmers arrived at each major city in Germany, blocking the autobahn with rows of tractors as far as the eye can see. In mid-January, German truckers and citizens joined the protest, followed by Scottish protesters rising in Scotland and French farmers descending on their capital. As of the writing of this article, the countries that have joined the farmers' protest against the Green Agenda include the Netherlands, Scotland, Germany, Poland, Belgium, Lithuania, Romania, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Argentina, New Zealand, India, Wales, and many fishermen along the coasts. Videos abound out of Europe - showing manure being sprayed at government buildings, gridlock for hundreds of kilometres from tractors parked on roads, Fishermen's horns blasting alongside tractors, food distribution centres being blocked, tire fires in Brussels, and some police forces in France using water cannons and rubber bullets on the protestors. One farmer in the Netherlands said that this was the endgame, and if the governments don't back down, it would lead to civil war. And back home we saw our own little tractor parade in front of the CVRD meeting in February, as they lined the streets to protest the flooding of almost 180 acres of farmland in Cowichan Bay.

Farmers are protesting Green Agendas that have put them into poverty, from demands such as decreasing their livestock by 30-50%, limiting/eliminating fertilizer, massive taxes on their fuels, unfair competition with tax-exempt nations like Ukraine exporting food to their countries, methane 'taxes', and the demand to "rewild" their lands. Leaders have offered concessions to 'pause' the 'New Green Rules' The farmers don't want a delay, they want them all removed. These protests, because of their size and magnitude, are putting some fear in those elected as there are elections in 2024, and polls see so-called "right-wing" populists surging.

These protests seemed timely as they were happening right after the COP 28 meeting in Dubai, which focused heavily on agricultural "reform" and agri-'science' to combat the alleged "climate change" arising from farmers and food production worldwide.

The World Economic Forum met in January, and from their released booklet on farming: "Yet farmers have often been left out of the decision-making process, meaning that policy, innovation, and value-chain decisions have not always been farmer-friendly. As a result, in Europe, farmers' incomes are 40% lower than the average wage in the EU27 economy."

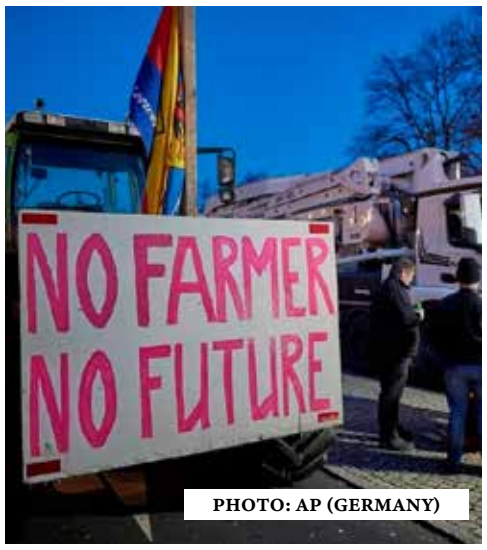


PHOTO: AP (GERMANY)

According to the COP28 page: "COP28 UAE, together with the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), supported by the UN Climate Change High-Level Champions, launched the Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes, transitioning 160 million hectares to regenerative agriculture by 2030, accompanied by USD$2.2 billion in future investment, and engaging 3.6 million farmers worldwide." There is a saying, "those who control the food-"

We see dairy farmers being thrown under the bus for having cows that "fart" and using water, and in comes other investors in this "green agenda" - "Remilk, the company redefining a dairy industry without cows, announced the appointment of three widely recognized and food industry insiders to its Board of Directors - Alicia Enciso (recent CMO of Nestle USA), Floris Wesseling (recent President of Danone Europe) and Pedro Padierna (former CEO and Chairman of PepsiCo Mexico)."

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched a USD$200 million partnership for Food Systems, Agriculture Innovation, and Climate Action, focused on agricultural research, scaling agricultural innovations, and funding technical assistance for implementing the Declaration. According to the central bank president, it will cost 620 billion per year to move to green policies - cost who? And payable to whom? The best guess is the public/private partnerships and NGOs will be the benefactors of this so-called transition, and the farmers and your average citizen will be paying literally, and figuratively.

The 45-page booklet from the World Economic Forum, "Transforming Food Systems with Farmers: A Pathway for the EU INSIGHT PAPER APRIL 2022," contains a forward by the president of Bayer's crop science', an interesting bedfellow especially when we hear statements from the WEF such as small farming is far worse for the environment than large-scale farming, which, as we know, needs more of Bayer's (who purchased Monsanto)products to be viable. Another new term was coined during the January 2024 WEF meeting, claiming farmers and fishermen were committing "ecocide,". They also stated that homegrown (backyard garden) food has a five times greater 'carbon footprint' than conventional food production. The WEF booklet has statements such as these: "Food systems are too big to be ignored. They are also one of the main contributors to the planetary crisis. Food and land use systems are responsible for up to one-third of global GHG emissions, are the primary driver of biodiversity loss, and account for 92% of the global water footprint." "The transition will also need to include broader 'shifts in production' and consumption models, such as 'dietary shifts". Shifts in consumption have already been highly touted by these global overseers such as limiting meat eating to once or twice a month, or only synthetic meat if you live in the West, limiting coffee consumption a few times a year, switching to lab-grown milk, as well as factory-farmed bugs. Al Gore has said that 20 countries produce 80% of the "emissions" so therefore those are the ones that need to sacrifice and remove their farms. The shift of 'production' has been suggested as farmers rewilding and giving their land 'back to nature,' shifting to container/hydroponic growing, and other such farming practices that can be monopolized by those who invest in these practices.

These new envisioned practices come with heavy monitoring. Examples from the WEF booklet: "Remote sensing (e.g., satellite, drone), Farm management software, Decision support apps for crop protection (optimizing or reducing pesticide use), Private weather station, Soil nutrient cartography, Soil analysis modelling, Variable rate seeding, Dynamic fertilizer application according to crop growth, Targeted application of herbicides enabled by cameras and sensors." The full surveillance state doesn't just end at cities; it will be implemented on all lands. Al Gore is a major investor in a new tech platform called Climate TRACE. It uses satellites, sensors and artificial intelligence to track greenhouse gas emissions around the globe.

Locally, we saw in 2023 that farmers in the CVRD lost over 500,000 in crops due to their water being shut off to "save the fish" in the Koksilah River, without any follow-up studies showing the amount of fish this water restriction saved, nor having anyone from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans at the table when these decisions were made. Farmers were left without any sort of motivation that their sacrifices made any difference, especially when it began to rain, as it always does, and the river saw record fish return during the rainy season, which was then too late for the third crop for these farmers. Farmers then had to import hay for their animals from places as far away as the interior, which can hardly be considered "emission-friendly". Farmers are not being given 'solutions', only told to restrict and cross their fingers that next year may not be the same. Nothing proactive, only reactive, no grants for water cisterns, no data, no compensation for their sacrifices.

The Federal government is squeezing farmers through carbon taxes and fertilizer restrictions. Make no mistake, this is a global attack, with many investors in the background already licking their chops as the diversion away from local sustainability and agriculture is being pressured to shift to large-scale food processing schemes stating things such as "rich countries should only eat synthetic meat". It is time to stand up with the farmers before we become a nation asking for rations of cricket protein and synthetic milk to be generously doled out based on your monthly carbon credit score.

- A Richards.

WHAT IS 432

Seems like an easy question, but it is actually quite a deep study going back millennia, that will only be broached herein. Some describe 432 as the cosmic number. Perhaps most simply, Pythagorean mathematics reduces 432 to the sum of its individual numbers (4+3+2) or 9. Attributed to Galileo is the statement that the book of nature is written in mathematical symbols.

From the Bible, where the beginning of the universe is described as word or vibration, to the Greeks who viewed the universe as mathematically based, to modern quantum physics with its studies of matter and energy, particles and waves, and everything in between, regardless of place or period, vibration is again and again presented as foundational and fundamental. While it is beyond the scope of this article, some go so far as to say that within the principles upon which our numerical system is built may be found the mathematical fingerprint of God

What may be most relevant to the current condition of the "modern" world is 432 hertz as a musical foundation. While not all agree on degree of importance or relevance, and tuning systems have varied across time and musical types, perhaps connected to the A432 tuning are some curious and compelling, some might say, coincidences. Simply put, 432 features as one of the building blocks of the universe. Whether as the approximate square root of the alleged speed of light, 186 000 miles per second, or as related to the alleged diameter of the moon at 2160 miles (4320/2) or roughly equal to the alleged radius of the sun (432 000 miles), or even the 432 dimples as determined to be optimal on the lowly golf ball, 432 and its fractals are ever-present. This study potentially deepens significantly into the field known as sacred geometry from which all architecture and music are ultimately rooted.

Most recently, in 1955 the International Organization for Standardization set the tuning of the A above the piano's middle C at 440 hertz or A 440 (alternatively, ISO 16 tuning). While many suggest there are nefarious reasons for this standard, with the results of this disharmony evidenced on any 6 o'clock news program, what is more compelling are the benefits that may be derived from music in the A 432 tuning. Some refer to this as True Solfeggio.* While this is not controversy-free either, the truth is that most people have a basic understanding of solfeggio as the do-re-mi musical system. This begins with middle C and ascends on the piano white keys to the next do or C- the complete octave. Notwithstanding any technical or conspiratorial considerations, there has been a resurgence of the use of 432 hertz as the foundational tuning tone in recent years.

Historically, Tibetan singing bowls made by monks have somehow been tuned by ear for who knows exactly how long to precisely this A 432 hertz scale. A youtube search will yield any number of compositions one can verify using a smartphone tuning app. Anyone who has listened to said singing bowls can attest to their profound and visceral effects. Many have experienced healings of all manners as a result of experiencing these ephemeral soundscapes touching the eternal. At the very least they can complement any other step on the healing journey, be it a trip to the dentist to more esoteric modalities, by easing distress, promoting de-stress, and supporting health by relieving disease. Does it matter to what frequency the bowls are tuned? Science may or may not be able to answer fully such questions presently. Discounting perhaps thousands of years of tradition without sound grounds, well...that would be rather "post-modern" some might say.

So, is there scientific evidence for the health benefits of A 432 tuning? The short answer is yes. Not only has it been shown to reduce inflammation, but it has also been shown to reduce emotional stress. A 2020 JAOS (Journal of Applied Oral Science) study paper states that dental care is "one of the five most feared situations." Because of its calming effect on the sympathetic nervous system, music serves to reduce anxiety in patients. This paper measured the salivary cortisol levels of a control group, as well as groups listening to A 440 and A 432 tuned music. Both music groups produced less stress chemicals than the control group and the A 432 group fared best of all. While music in both tunings was described as relaxing, the impact of personal preference was not noted in the results. Interestingly, there was no change in the patients' clinical perception of anxiety in this study. Other studies have shown a decrease in perceived anxiety, as well as benefits to blood pressure and heart rate. While limited, still other studies show the benefits of music and specifically A 432 for both healthcare providers and patients alike.

While most people may not be able to distinguish consciously between tunings, an argument can be made that the less conscious aspects of living organisms often do. Will this cure the incurable or lead the blind to see? For the time being what role musical tuning can play in health outcomes must remain an open question. That all things are vibrational in nature appears to have been generally understood in many different ways since the beginning of time. Can this existential aspect be impacted by specific application of frequency? Simultaneously, in this question are embodied the most ancient of secrets and the vanguard of present day health inquiry.

For those with an interest in diving deeper, the work of Jamie Buturff on Youtube provides a useful departure point. Much of the information in this article can be found expanded upon beginning with the video titled The Cosmic 432. There are many others. Dissenting voices provide a counterpoint. True Solfeggio by Alex Michael stands out as a masterpiece of modern and healing music that would be well worth the auditory excursion for any audiophile looking to explore the frontier of the 432 universe. Bon voyage.

*Read more here:

www.conspiracymusicguru.com/true-solfeggio

Steven Lay is a quantum healing practitioner who works remotely, or in person and offers a sliding scale for those with financial challenges. Steven can be reached at 250-874-1369







PROVINCIAL BILLS THAT YOU

BILL 44 OVERRIDES LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

In November, the BC NDP swiftly advanced three pivotal bills: Bill 44, 46, and 47. These legislative measures marked a significant transfer of local powers to the province, superseding established Official Community Plans (OCP).

Among the sweeping changes, public input was eradicated, minimum building heights were mandated, maximum density was enforced, and strata powers dictating occupants were rescinded. The province, along with the Attorney General of B.C., now holds sway over these critical aspects. Notably, Bill 44 emerged as the focal point, encompassing the majority of these transformative alterations.

During the North Cowichan council meeting on January 17th, an application to amend a development bylaw came under discussion. One proposal sought a zoning change, enabling the owner to add a carriage house to the property in Chemainus. Councillor Istace voiced support for the growth, asserting its alignment with the Chemainus revitalization plan, targeted growth plan, and the Official Community Plan (OCP) that had "extensive public hearing and engagement". Despite claims of extensive public hearing and engagement during the OCP's creation, evidence suggests the contrary due to the pandemic's distractions during the creation of it. Nevertheless, the relevance of such consultations diminishes, given the passage of bills, particularly Bill 44, mandating the first review and update of official community plans by December 31, 2025.

Councillor Findlay expressed agreement with the development but voiced dissatisfaction about the absence of a public hearing, stating he agreed with the development but was "ticked off about no public hearing." Councillor Justice, aligning with the application's adherence to the aforementioned bill that justified the lack of public input. In supporting the waiver of the public hearing process, Councillor Justice stated, "Following up on what Councillor Findlay said - I support the waiving of the public hearing process on this within the fact that the province is setting through this for the reasons we need to help people do their developments and move them on expeditiously." He added, "Thank you for the latitude on the reasonings behind supporting the public hearing being omitted with these types of things from the new Bill from the province."

While an additional carriage home may not seem significant, celebrating the absence of public input in development raises substantial concerns. To which bills was Councillor Istace referring? Bills 44, 46, and 47, forcefully enacted without local government engagement by the province in November 2023. These bills, fervently championed by the Urban Development Institute (UDI) with numerous conflicts of interest, being funded by both the BC and Federal Governments and boasting members such as BC Transit, BC Hydro, and Urban Systems (currently crafting the N.C. climate adaptation plan), are poised to profoundly reshape the appearance of your towns while eliminating both council and public input.

Within the Local Government Act (LGA), the council traditionally had the option to permit public input on developments in their respective areas. But after consulting with North Cowichan's Legislative Department, it was revealed that the Province had quietly changed the Local Government Act to disallow public hearings for buildings within growth centres (See picture)

"The major package of housing bills was introduced at the beginning of November, giving opposition MLAs 'only a matter of weeks to properly scrutinize them,'" B.C. United house leader Todd Stone said in the legislature Monday, objecting to the harried pace of debate in the final week before the fall session wraps up on Thursday. B.C. Green MLA Adam Olsen said he has been stonewalled when asking Housing Minister Ravi Kahlon for the data and research that informed the housing legislation, particularly the upzoning bill for single-family lots, which he said will have the impact of inflating property values for existing homeowners while failing to add below-market housing for British Columbians who have been priced out. "These laws potentially hand intergenerational wealth to people who already have it and offer absolutely nothing to renters and non-homeowners," Olsen said. - The Vancouver Sun, November 23rd.

Conveniently, the Province announced incentives to municipalities on Jan 18th amounting to over 51 million tax dollar handouts to implement these housing plans. Some examples on the island of these handouts include:

City of Duncan: $173,943
City of Nanaimo: $619,936
City of Victoria: $582,582
Town of Ladysmith: $191,995
CVRD: $323,554.

These bills mandate municipalities to endorse three to four units on a single-family lot, circumventing public hearings. The majority of North Cowichan residents meet the four-unit criteria, so will your property assessment now reflect what could potentially be placed on your property? These bills eliminate almost all parking requirements, asserting that active transport within the 15-minute city negates the need for cars.

The minimum parking requirements for off-street parking currently applicable to six-unit lots will be eradicated, enabling the construction of high-density buildings with zero parking, as per the government's biking-centric vision. By June 30, 2024, Bill 44 compels local governments to amend zoning bylaws to accommodate "Secondary Suites and Missing Middle Unit Housing." In Auckland, New Zealand, their "Missing Middle" housing campaign triggered a 12% surge in property taxes. While Bill 44 prevents municipalities from restricting the number of units on a Single Family Lot to less than permitted, a municipality may permit more units.

One bill strips local councils of the authority to dismantle "tent cities" unless they can provide housing. Stratas are no longer allowed restrictions for rentals, potentially diminishing property values. Additionally, age restrictions, except for 55+, are prohibited in stratas (i.e., 19+). The BC Vacancy Tax no longer grants exemptions based on rental restrictions in stratas, imposing a 0.5% vacancy

Requirement for public hearing before adopting bylaw

Nov 30/23 **464.** (1) Subject to this section, a local government must not adopt

(a) an official community plan bylaw,

(b) a zoning bylaw, or

(c) a bylaw under section 548 *[early termination of land use contracts]*

without holding a public hearing on the bylaw for the purpose of allowing the public to make representations to the local government respecting matters contained in the proposed bylaw.

Nov 30/23 (2) Subject to this section, a local government is not required to hold a public hearing on a proposed zoning bylaw if

(a) an official community plan is in effect for the area that is the subject of the zoning bylaw, and

(b) the bylaw is consistent with the official community plan.

Nov 30/23 (3) A local government must not hold a public hearing on a proposed zoning bylaw if

(a) an official community plan is in effect for the area that is the subject of the zoning bylaw,

(b) the bylaw is consistent with the official community plan,

(c) the sole purpose of the bylaw is to permit a development that is, in whole or in part, a residential development, and

(d) the residential component of the development accounts for at least half of the gross floor area of all buildings and other structures proposed as part of the development.

Dec 07/23 (4) A local government must not hold a public hearing on a zoning bylaw proposed for the sole purpose of complying with section 481.3 *[zoning bylaws and small-scale multi-family housing]*.

RS2015-1-464 (B.C. Reg. 257/2015); 2021-30-26; 2023-45-5; 2023-45-6 (B.C. Reg. 262/2023).

tax on Canadian citizens with vacant properties and a 2% tax on non-Canadian citizens. Local governments, once obligated to provide a 5-year housing and growth plan, now must present a 20-year plan. The Attorney General of B.C. can override local plans if the Province disagrees with their density.

The Province now determines minimum height requirements, stripping local governments of power to set maximum height requirements. These decisions appear incongruent with our Official Community Plan (OCP), forecasting a minimal population increase by 2050 and a steep decline in youth, signaling a rise in aging residents. North Cowichan has already sanctioned sufficient housing for its projected 2050 population growth. With Canadian birth rates at an all-time low, questions arise: are these projects for new arrivals, or for those losing homes due to rising assessment values and increased taxes?

The province's housing demands lack mandates for affordable housing. Local governments no longer have the authority to require builders to include affordable housing in new builds. Mass density is emphasized, exemplified by units as small as 360 sq ft in North Cowichan's recent apartment building approval near the new RCMP building. Duncan, aligning with UN Sustainability Goals mentioned in their OCP in the works, rushes to become a 15-minute city, implementing measures like "traffic calming," scramble crosswalks, bike lane infrastructure, lowered speed limits, lane narrowing, and towering apartments. This prompts speculation about the fate of once-charming family neighbourhoods – could they transform into mass-density areas or, perhaps, 'slums'? Former homeowners may be compelled to relocate under the 15-minute city agenda's propositions, such as "You will own nothing and be happy," and "you will share your small space with others who may use it as a business space when you are not in it." The provincial agenda raises concerns about the future landscape of housing, affordability, and community well-being.

When the government cries "crises" and swoops in with the solution, it rarely turns out for the better. When phrases are introduced such as "Urban Sprawl" to replace "suburbs", and "family neighbourhoods" to demonize a way of life so many strive to have for their families, there may be ulterior motives. We will look further into the conflicts of interest in this overstep of government in future articles.

BILL 31 LOSS OF DEMOCRACY?

Bill 31, is possibly the scariest bill the NDP put forward in their mad rush to force through bills in winter of 2023. It is oddly reflective of the World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic treaty that its member states, of which Canada is one, are looking to sign on to in the spring of 2024.

WHO Pandemic Treaty: "This treaty as proposed, a legally binding treaty would see power given to the WHO to direct the global health management of pandemics. The treaty will define and classify what is to be considered a pandemic. Once a pandemic is declared, the WHO would require countries to adopt specific response measures."In official comments provided to the WHO on the Working Draft in September 2022, the government stated that the treaty should "contain both legally binding as well as non-legally binding elements." Among the input provided, the government has advocated for the new instrument to be "inclusive and defined by an all-hazards approach in alignment with the IHR," and that "other global health threats" should be included in the new instrument, including "climate change impacts, air pollution, chemical contamination." In an Inquiry of Ministry response received by MP Lewis on December 11, 2023, the government further stated that the accord should "be based on science and evidence, aim to enhance health equity and gender equality, respect national contexts, and compliment [sic] existing tools. It should advance a One Health approach, strengthen health systems, data and information sharing, and enhance accountability for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response."- leslynlewismp.ca

This is something to keep in mind as we give a short overview of Bill 31, an amendment to the Emergency Program Act, and its introduction of a series of changes that raise concerns about its potential implications.

This bill states it is in alignment with international agreements like the UN Sendai Framework and introduces the possibility of global influence in local emergency responses."The Sendai Framework" works hand in hand with the other 2030 Agenda agreements, including The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the New Urban Agenda, and ultimately the Sustainable Development Goals." It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly following the 2015 Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR).

New and worrisome definitions in Bill31:

Bill 31 broadens the definition of an "emergency" to include a myriad of events, (rioting - NEW, security threat - NEW, terrorist activity) NEW, prescribed incident - NEW) The inclusion of health crises and subjective terms like "security threats" and "prescribed incident" (of which there is no definition listed) raises concerns about the potential for broad interpretation and application. And the word "emergency" means now includes: "a state that (a) is the result of any of the following: (i) an event that (A) has occurred, is ongoing or appears imminent, and (B) is caused by one or more incidents, whether or not those incidents occur in the same location or at the same time, of accident, fire, explosion, technical failure, rioting, security threat, terrorist activity within the meaning of section 83.01 of the Criminal Code, force of nature or a prescribed type of incident; (ii) the presence, suspected presence or imminent spread of a transmissible disease or an environmental toxin; (iii) a prescribed type of event or the presence or suspected presence of prescribed circumstances, and (b) requires the prompt coordination of action, or the special regulation of persons or property, to protect (i) the health, safety or well-being of persons.

Excerpts of note from the definition of "vulnerable": " concerning individuals, animals, places, or things, or a class of them, is defined as: b. Possessing characteristics prescribed by regulations." Who may be 'saved' by the government or removed, if need be?

Identification of "Critical Infrastructure" (Section 48): May lead to subjective interpretations of what is deemed "critical" and therefore be under the boot of the Bill. Definition of Critical Infrastructure encompasses systems, networks, facilities, or assets. These can be physical or virtual and may be publicly or privately owned. Or its class is designed, used, or intended to be used for: "b. It is necessary to protect, maintain, or restore one or more of the following: i. The health, safety, or well-being of persons. ii. The environment. iii. The economy. iv. The security of the province. v. The effective functioning of any branch of government. vi. The provision of emergency resources. vii. Any other matters as prescribed." Think Federal Emergencies act on steroids.

Some factors that could trigger an emergency - Definition of "Circumstances": "a. The person engages in an activity that is or may create a hazard. b. The person uses a process or property in a manner that is or may create a hazard. c. A condition that is or may create a hazard exists or may exist on land owned or occupied by the person." WELL open to interpretation, especially the many uses of the word "may" throughout the bill, does conjure up some jack-boots using these definitions.

(Continued on the next page...)

MORE PROVINCIAL BILLS THAT YOU

A few actions that may be the subject of an order by the minister: 'c. Implementing one or more emergency measures. d. Offering emergency resources or the use of land, encompassing situations involving individuals and animals evacuated from another jurisdiction, as well as personal property removed from another jurisdiction.' The minister is granted the authority to request a government minister, the Nisga'a Nation, or a treaty first nation to undertake one or more of the actions described in subsection (3). Which includes allowing these emergency powers to be used by the First Nations.

Compelled Information Sharing: The minister, if satisfied that a person has necessary information, may order them to provide it to another person, the provincial administrator, or a lead minister. You may be compelled to share information or correspondence you had with another person, or your private records (health etc.) may be obtained, as they now also can be through Bill 36

Property Control (77): The minister, through an order, can appropriate, use, or control personal property, control the use of land, authorize entry, prohibit entry, and regulate trees, crops.

General Restrictions (Section 78) Travel, Business, and Events (78): The minister has the authority to control or prohibit travel to/from an area, the carrying on of business, or the holding of events.

(81)The Lieutenant Governor in Council is empowered to create regulations under this Division, and these regulations may apply to various parameters: b. Areas not covered by a declaration of a state of provincial emergency. d. To specific persons, things, or classes of persons or things, as determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Incredibly broad again, not even needing an emergency in an area, and expands on these powers as they are not limited by Section 41 of the Interpretation Act, implying that it allows for additional flexibility and discretion in the creation and application of regulations.

Minister's Authority (Section 5): Granting the minister broad authority to issue orders if objectives are not met introduces a significant concentration of power. But the Minister may also be overruled: "The participating authority is not obligated to seek the approval of the minister to exercise a power under Division 1 or 2 of Part 6. Limitation on Minister's Authority: In such cases, the minister is restricted in their authority to intervene in the decisions made by the participating authority. Specifically: b. The minister is not permitted to cancel a declaration of a state of local emergency or a declaration of a local recovery period made by the participating authority." The exemption of ministerial approval for government entities acting under an emergency measures agreement raises questions about checks and balances, potentially allowing decisions with significant local impact without sufficient oversight, to be made by the Lieutenant Governor, out-of-country entities, or the federal Government.

Local Authority Agreements (Section 23): While encouraging cooperation, the requirement for consent from Indigenous governing bodies underscores the potential for differing standards and introduces complexities in emergency management. Indigenous. While acknowledging Indigenous governance structures, the provision allowing opt-out from the Bill and its repercussions for not complying introduces complexities and potential discrepancies in emergency management standards across jurisdictions.

Unlike in the past, these powers can be invoked BEFORE and AFTER a so-called emergency: Preemptive and Post-Emergency Powers (Various Sections): Granting powers both before and after an emergency raises questions about the necessity for such expansive temporal scope. The potential for preemptive actions and extended authority post-emergency demands scrutiny regarding the balance between necessity and citizens' rights.

Removal of Liability and Stringent Enforcement Measures (Various Sections): Removing liability from individuals enforcing orders during emergencies will severely impact accountability. Stringent enforcement measures, including hefty fines and imprisonment, for those not complying with enforcing measures, and those not complying to the restrictions, raise concerns about proportionality, fairness, and the potential for overreach.

Bill 31 presents a series of changes that, when examined closely, raise legitimate concerns about individual rights, accountability, and the potential influence of international agreements on local governance. Striking the right balance between effective emergency management and safeguarding individual liberties, rights to protest and more, remains a critical consideration as this legislative framework progresses. Public dialogue and scrutiny were not obtained, and if the past three years show how much the government can wield its powers, they basically just said "hold my beer" and went full totalitarian.

BILL 36 HEALTHCARE CONTROVERSY

More than 10,000 individuals have voiced their concerns by signing a petition urging the British Columbia government to halt its ambitious overhaul of the province's healthcare colleges. The catalyst for this widespread dissent was the passage of Bill 36, also known as the Health Professions and Occupations Act, in November.

The Government of BC passed Bill 36, as the new Health Professions and Occupations Act (HPOA) RESTRICTIONS Now in Place:

1. All BC practitioners must now follow health guidelines set by political appointees for their patients or risk penalties including loss of license to practice.

2. Non-compliance with Ministry therapeutic guidelines may result in fines up to $200,000 or $500,000 (corporations) and incarceration up to 6 months or 2 years.

3. Anonymous complaints to the Colleges can result in summary suspension of licensure to practice before the complaint is investigated.

4. Appointees chosen by politicians may now enter a healthcare practice, seize patient records and restrict access to that facility without a warrant or court order.

5. Refusal to accept all Ministry-mandated vaccines and therapies will likely result in loss of license.

6. College advisory boards will now consist of government appointees only.

7. All "self-regulatory" healthcare professions in BC will be governed entirely by politicians and their agents, using appointees selected by the Ministry of Health.

8. The Cabinet and the Minister of Health can adopt as law in BC any regulations, codes, standards or rules enacted in foreign jurisdictions or international bodies.

9. The new Health Professions and Occupations Act requires further elucidation of undefined terms used in the Act, such as "false or misleading information", which may be defined by appointees at their discretion, lacking consultation with health professionals.

Bill 36 was one of the largest bills ever passed in British Columbia, consisting of 645 sections and 276 pages, that received royal assent on November 24, 2022. Members of the BC legislature failed to fully consider or debate the 412 clauses. MLA Mike Farnworth made the motion to dispose (end) the debate, and that motion was carried. The public was denied due democratic process to have a fully debated and considered bill, violating the BC government's own Standing Order s. 84 (1)(2) of the BC Constitution Act (1996), s.45.

One notable criticism is the alleged lack of consultation with healthcare workers during the drafting of Bill 36. Rustad claims that the legislation was developed

LIKELY HAVEN'T HEARD OF

without adequate input from the healthcare community, occurring behind closed doors with the imposition of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) on healthcare profession colleges.

As the petition gains momentum, the debate over the restructuring of healthcare colleges in British Columbia intensifies, with healthcare professionals and concerned citizens advocating for a more inclusive and transparent decision-making process.

Call for a 2-minute recording summarizing Bill 36 : Call Now!
(604) 659-9476
Print materials, postcards to sign and mail to your MLA all available at Canadian Society for Science & Ethics in Medicine
www.CSSEM.org

SPECULATION TAX TO HIT FARMERS?

Locals in our area will notice that they are on the Province's radar when it comes to speculation after receiving letters demanding that you 'prove' to the province, on an annual basis, that you indeed do live in your home.

The Province has sent out letters with your magic code to log into an online data collection site, where you can then take the steps to verify your status as a resident, under the notion that this will help the so-called housing 'crises'. From the BC website: "More than $81 million will help fund affordable housing projects where the tax applies 83% of the revenue comes from foreign owners, untaxed worldwide earners, Canadians living outside B.C. and "other" non-B.C. resident owners". Yet according to bcbuildshomes.ca, they do not pay for, or subsidize, low-income rentals, and the province states often that that is not in their wheelhouse.

It appears that everything is eventually meant to be under constant surveillance and documentation, aligning with the global objectives of monitoring and tracking all resource use, land usage, animals, and more. The explicit aim is to create a comprehensive data bank of the world. Adding to the farmers' existing burden of monitoring, Premier Eby has announced the province's contemplation of implementing a version of this speculation tax on farmland in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). As of our knowledge, the Province has not approached the ALR, and there are no details available on what would qualify as 'underused' farmland at this juncture.

Numerous questions surface concerning these speculation taxes. Is it a legal tax, considering it did not originate in the House of Commons? Some argue that by examining the definition of 'speculation,' it lacks evidential support, and if brought to court, it might be viewed as blatant malfeasance, breach of trust, and in bad faith. Notably, failing to submit the letter automatically subjects one to the additional tax, potentially interpreted as a submission under duress.

Feeling the squeeze yet?

A. Richards

** Interpretations are subjective; consult original bills for accuracy. **



PAPER'S PLEASE! BILL, S-210



In a move that has sparked widespread concern among privacy advocates and internet users across Canada, a new bill making its way through Parliament threatens to significantly alter the landscape of internet freedom under the banner of protecting minors from sexually explicit materials.

David Fraser, a renowned privacy, internet, and technology lawyer, has emerged as a vocal critic of the bill, shedding light on its far-reaching implications.

Fraser, speaking from his experience as a legal expert and educator, warned, "There's a bill working its way through the Parliament that presents a clear and present danger to the free and open Internet, to freedom of expression, and to privacy online." This statement underscores the gravity of the legislation, which, while aiming to safeguard children, may inadvertently impose stringent restrictions on the digital rights of all Canadians.

Introduced by Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne, the bill requires global websites to implement age verification processes to prevent minors from accessing sexually explicit content. On the surface, this initiative aligns with the public's interest in protecting the youth. However, Fraser points out a critical flaw in the legislation's approach: "It will require any website on the entire global internet that makes sexually explicit material available to verify the age of anyone who wants access to ensure that they are not under the age of 18."

The primary concern revolves around the bill's broad definitions and its potential to infringe upon privacy. Fraser elaborates, "The devil, as they say, is in the details. It presents a real risk to privacy, a real risk to freedom of expression, and a real danger to the open Internet in Canada." By mandating age verification, the bill could force websites to collect sensitive personal information, raising significant privacy and security concerns.

Moreover, the legislation's scope could extend beyond explicit content, affecting educational materials on sexual health, art, and literature. Fraser highlights the potential for overreach:

"The definition is so broad that it covers Wikipedia articles related to art, reproduction, and sexual health. It is certainly not limited to materials that would solely cause a reasonable risk of harm to a young person."

The enforcement mechanisms proposed by the bill, including the power granted to regulatory authorities like the CRTC, have also been a point of contention. Fraser fears that this could lead to excessive regulation and censorship,

"The enforcement authority, who I'm afraid, will be the CRTC's porn police, may issue a notice… essentially blocking the site."

As the bill garners support among lawmakers, the debate intensifies over the balance between protecting minors and preserving the fundamental rights to privacy and freedom of expression. Fraser's critique serves as a call to action for a more nuanced discussion on internet regulation, urging lawmakers to consider the unintended consequences of their efforts to protect children.

While the intentions behind the bill may be commendable, its implementation raises critical questions about the cost to Canadians' privacy and freedom. As this legislation progresses, it is imperative for the public, legal experts, and lawmakers to engage in a thorough examination of its potential impacts, ensuring that the pursuit of protection does not come at the expense of the liberties that define the open internet.

- Joseph

WARREN'S MARKET UPDATE



We had a fairly normal January and REALTORS® are reporting that plenty of listings will be hitting the market this spring. There is also a sense of optimism regarding the upcoming months and homes are selling surprisingly quickly if priced sharply. However, interest rates and the mortgage stress test continue to deter some buyers, as does the pervasive low inventory in the Cowichan area, which limits the selection of affordable homes.

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

RE/MAX ISLAND PROPERTIES

COWICHAN VALLEY MARKET STATISTICS - JANUARY 2024

SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED

AVERAGE SALE PRICE

JANUARY 2023: $683,863
JANUARY 2024: $773,230 ↑

NUMBER OF SALES

JANUARY 2023: 28
JANUARY 2024: 23 ↓

DAYS ON THE MARKET

JANUARY 2023: 71
JANUARY 2024: 44 ↓

SOURCE: VIREB MARKET STATISTICS 2024 | 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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