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CVRD CONSIDERS REMOVING PUBLIC INPUT FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

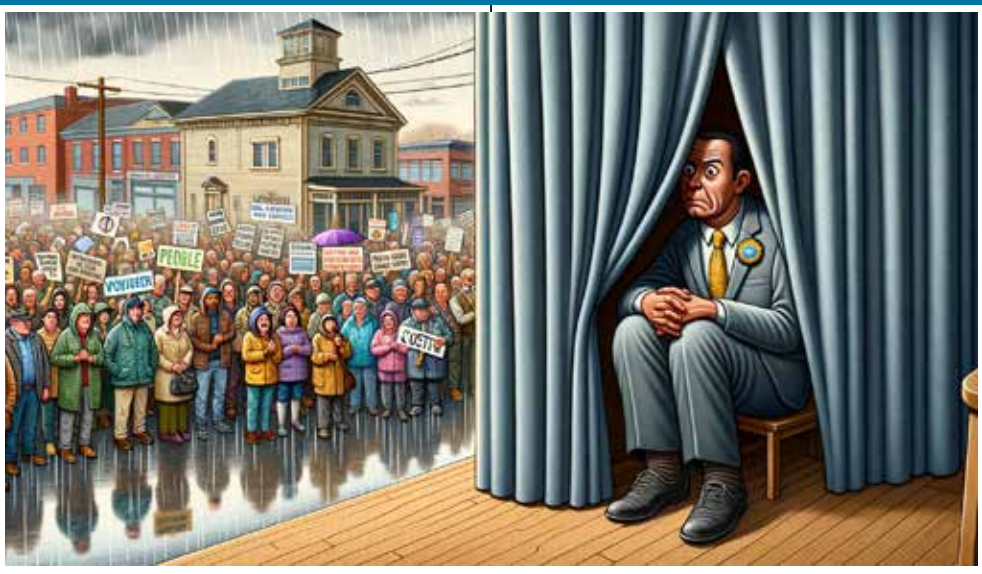
CVRD STAFF CAUTION DIRECTORS ON CONTINUED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Absurdity of "Safe Spaces" for Elected Officials in the Cowichan Valley.

In the midst of an affordability crisis, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has become a focal point of intense public scrutiny over proposed tax hikes and the perceived detachment of elected officials from the hardships of their constituents. As the region grapples with record-breaking inflation and a housing crisis, the irony of officials seeking "safe spaces" from public feedback highlights a troubling disconnect in local governance.

The recent uproar began when the CVRD proposed a daunting 19.33% tax increase, leading to a significant public backlash that saw the board revising the increase down to 16%. This financial strain on residents sparked a broader debate about the nature of public input and the role of elected officials in addressing community concerns. Amid these discussions, some directors expressed a desire to limit public engagement—a move that has not gone unnoticed by the community.

On April 3rd, the CVRD hosted their Governance Committee Meeting, where Patrick Robbins, CVRD Corporate Officer, offered his feedback regarding public input. "I apologize if I'm using pretty strong language..." He noted, "There is this sense



of, sometimes those that disagree with you need to debate with you and convince you that you're wrong."

Director Acton remarked, "I actually have never had a question period feel valuable," coupled with her suggestion that "Often the last minute public input can be unfactual, and there's no way to verify that... It's not valuable input," underscore a growing sentiment among some officials to diminish the role of public discourse in governance. Director Istace further emphasized this stance by stating, "I hope our chairs feel confident enough to cut people off immediately if they are speeches or statements," and suggesting that such interactions should be relegated to emails rather than public forums.

This inclination to restrict public input reaches its zenith with Director Segall's mention of a "respectful spaces" bylaw that will be coming forward relatively soon... to try to create a safe space where the public can engage with us and we still feel safe within that, not intimidated and frightened, because that's real." This notion that elected officials might need protection from the very people they serve paints a bizarre picture—one where dialogues are filtered and sanitized to ensure that only palatable opinions reach the ears of those in power.

The public's response has been one of resolute opposition. Protests and petitions have become the tools of a beleaguered community pushing back against what they see as fiscal irresponsibility and a lack of empathy from their leaders. The image of residents wielding soggy cardboard signs under pouring rain vividly illustrates the depth of local discontent and the urgent call for more transparent and inclusive governance.

As local officials propose creating buffer zones between themselves and their electorate, the absurdity of needing "safe spaces" from public outcry becomes starkly apparent. This approach not only undermines the democratic process but also alienates the very individuals these officials are supposed to represent. The suggestion that public input should be curtailed to make governance more "manageable" is not only impractical but also antithetical to the principles of open and accountable leadership.

This situation reflects a broader challenge facing many communities today: balancing effective governance with genuine public engagement. As elected officials navigate these turbulent times, they must remember that their primary role is to serve the public interest—not to insulate themselves from it. Embracing public discourse, however contentious, is essential for fostering a governance culture that is both responsive and resilient. The path forward for Cowichan Valley—and indeed for any democratic community—is paved with more dialogue, not less, and with leaders who are prepared to face their constituents, not hide from them. - Staff

TOWN HALL ANNOUNCEMENT

Coming to Duncan on April 20th, 2:30 PM, at the Duncan United Church.

The Town Hall will cover Provincial Bills 44-47, 31, 36, and touch on street disorder issues.

Bills 44-47 could have a significant impact on how your neighbourhoods look going forward. Bills 44-47 remove public consultations for new builds, demand certain height minimums as well as forcing 4-6 unit housing into neighbourhoods. Will these bills change your Local Area Plans?

Bill 36 has completely changed the structure and governance of healthcare colleges, removed patient privacy, placed threats of jail and fines on healthcare workers for advising patients on healthcare practices not approved by the Province and more. Do you work in the healthcare field? Are you a Naturopath, Nurse, Dentist, Councillor, Massage Therapist, or other? The information around this bill may be relevant to you.

Bill 31 is an overhaul of the Emergencies Management act, which has expanded the justifications for emergencies, created longer timelines for an emergency, gives powers to seize your property, and includes vague words over what constitutes a threat. Will this bill have you potentially caught in its web?

Street Disorder is a rampant and growing issue in towns across BC. What is being done? Are the solutions working?

If any of these Bills are of concern, we would love to see you at the Duncan Town Hall.

Sincerely, BC Town Hall 2024 Volunteers.

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SAFE CARE ACT - PRIVATE MEMBERS BILL

Private Members' Bill to give parents control in times of crises - BILL M 202 – 2024

SAFE CARE ACT

There is a growing awareness that the current system of providing free drugs, wet housing, and injection sites is not the solution to addiction and mental health issues. Many groups are forming to address these challenges, and local governments feel burdened as these initiatives, which are primarily provincial, are being passed down to them and taxpayers to manage. One demographic often overlooked in discussions about these needs is our youth.

The resources available for addicted youth are far from adequate. The prospect of waiting months for youth recovery beds is distressing, contributing to a growing number of young people being ensnared in the cycle of addiction. Compounding the issue is the Infants Act in BC, which stipulates that there is no age limit for a child to manage their health choices. Consequently, parents and guardians find themselves isolated and powerless when attempting to intervene in their children's crises.

While children are restricted from so many other activities and decisions due to the incomplete development of their frontal lobes, the Infants Act paradoxically allows them to refuse therapy, detox, rehab, and counselling services. This leaves parents feeling helpless, scared, and desperate.

Despite parents' pleas for change, children are informed of their rights to decline crucial services during their initial meetings with these facilities. This raises questions about why children are entrusted with decisions that could potentially lead to their demise or serious harm. Parents, who are intimately familiar with their children's crises, are left out of the picture.

Even if parents manage to get their children into detox programs, many children leave of their own accord due to discomfort they may feel, exacerbating the wait for rehab, which often requires prior detox for admission. Tragically, this delay has led to the loss of many young lives. Parents understand when their children are in crisis and are best positioned to make decisions on their behalf.

MLA Sturdy is bringing forward a Private Members' Bill, after hearing stories from parents who lost their children to overdoses while they were struggling to get help. The Bill is designed to protect minors struggling with mental health and addiction challenges. It is a last-resort tool that allows for the limited use of involuntary treatment to protect vulnerable youth at risk of serious harm.

MLA Sturdy has noted, "Any decision to implement involuntary care is not something I take lightly, however, I stand firm in the belief that there are times when compassionate involuntary care is necessary to save lives."

The Safe Care Act authorizes a parent, adoption director, child and family services director or safe care director to apply to the Provincial Court for an apprehension order in respect of a child if the applicant reasonably believes that the child is at risk of serious harm, and no less intrusive measure is available to reduce the risk to the child's health or safety.

The purpose of the apprehension order is to create the space, under medical oversight, to stabilize the child and give them some time and opportunity to get out of what they may view as an impossible circumstance. Before applying for an apprehension order, a parent, adoption director, child and family services director or safe care director must first obtain leave of the court, and discuss the child's circumstances and the voluntary alternatives available.

The child must be informed of their rights and when less intrusive options are available, the system defaults to those options. If these conditions can be met, the Court can allow that a child be detained under an apprehension order, in a safe care facility, for up to 4 days; under a stabilization and assessment order, up to 15 days; and under an order to extend a stabilization and assessment order, up to 30 days. Each step requires the court to agree this action is in the best interest of the child and that no less intrusive measures are available or adequate.

Somehow the NDP are against this Private Members' Bill, which could be a means of complacency in future children's deaths.

If you support this private members bill, please write your local MLA and phone in your support to MLA Sturdy, West Vancouver-Sea to Sky:

Ph. 604-894-9403

email: jordan.sturdy.MLA@leg.bc.ca

- Staff



DFO CONTINUES TO ATTACK LOCAL FISHERIES PT2

Correction from part 1: The letter to the Minister was written by the President of Port Renfrew Chamber of Commerce (not Port Alberni) Chris Tucker.

In part two of our series, to come in edition 12, we will focus on the slow crushing of our fishing industry, we will again focus on the vibrant fishing town of Port Renfrew.

A village of approximately 500 residents whose businesses and livelihoods rely heavily on the sport/charter fishing income which brings in approx. 26 million into the town during the fishing season. The DFO shut down the Chinook fishing industry for 2024 on April 1st for many areas, Port Renfrew being one. The small town will be devastated, and over 100 businesses may shut down permanently, will they survive with just catch and release allowed?

The story revolves around the protection of the Southern Resident Killer Whales' (SRKW) food source which consists mainly of Chinook. In edition 10 we, with local fishermen's historical knowledge of the area, debunked the baseless arguments made by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) regarding the SRKW's food source and health having anything to do with recreational fishing. Who are the players behind the devastation of the industry? It seems eerily similar to the pattern we see with other industries such as farming, where outside, non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs), team up with a Ministry to supply them with so-called "science" or "modelling" showing how harmful their industry is to *insert some plant, animal, marine life * here.

In Edition 12 we will delve into the money and the NGOs behind many of these decisions, as well as global/federal agreements such as 30x30 - a goal to protect 30% of Land and water by 2030.

In conversation with fishermen in Port Renfrew, we have heard that they have constantly reached out to senior levels of the DFO and are not being responded to as of the date of this printing.

A local candidate for the Federal Conservatives has created a house petition - Link to petition: read more and sign if you are interested: **www.wind.ca/4913**

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

AUTHORIZED BY DAVE LAROCQUE, FINANCIAL AGENT, DAVELARO@SHAW.CA

MARINA SAPOZHNIKOV

- JUAN DE FUCA-MALAHAT -



That afternoon my friend sounded tired on the phone. When I asked why, she said, "I am going through hell".

In the last few months, she found out that her sweet, grade A student, athletic teenage son was addicted to drugs. When the shock passed, she went on a mission to save him just to find out that things were going from bad to worse. With growing desperation, she was knocking on one door after another but there was no answer. The system is simply not designed to treat people. And it is hostile to parents.

When finally, the teen was able to get a treatment bed after two days, still in the agony of withdrawal, he was discharged at his own request. The parents were not able to take part in the treatment and practically excluded from decision-making for their son. All that was left for them was to helplessly watch their child sinking deeper into addiction. The addiction that started with an innocent invitation from a friend:" Do you want to try one of these? It is fun. It is safe."

There's been a concerning emphasis on "harm reduction" as the toxic drug crisis in B.C. has tragically reached a record 2,511 deaths last year, with approximately 225,000 individuals (almost 5%) using drugs. Since April 2016, this crisis has claimed 13,317 lives, averaging over six deaths per day. This ongoing loss of life is intolerable. Advocates for "safe-supply" gave up on a comprehensive approach to addiction, neglecting prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and enforcement measures. Worse yet, some emphasize that drug use is acceptable.

The people of BC urgently require increased access to substance-use treatment, recovery programs, job training, mental-health services. BC's budget for drug addictions is $40 million and doesn't cover much more than the salaries of those distributing it. To compare, in Alberta, it is $1.55 billion and provides 10,000 treatment beds and they are all full, and working on building recovery communities. The Alberta Addictions and Mental Health Minister Dan Williams, called the BC's "harm reduction" program a "harm production" program.

We keep hearing from the NDP government about fighting "stigma and prejudice", when we really need to fight the crisis. When the average age of first-time drug or alcohol use is 13, when the number one cause of death in children 10-18 is drug overdose, we need preventive programs in schools which include education on drug and alcohol effects. We also need to fight the dangerous misconception that the drugs are "safe", just because they are being prescribed, and do our best to prevent our children from never touching them and safeguard against drug dealers. The best help and support children have are their parents.

The government denies the extent of diversion, that is when drug users sell drugs from "safer supply" to drug dealers who go on to sell the drugs to our children. The consequence is that we see the effects of an ever-increasing drug crisis all around us. Why is it that the obvious solutions like strong preventive programs in schools are absent? At this point we need to fight the treacherous misconception that the drugs are "safe", just because they are being prescribed, and do our best to prevent our children from ever touching them and safeguarding against drug dealers. They need to know that experimenting with drugs is dangerous. Some children are first exposed to drugs at home, often from the "safer supply". We need to support parents who are dealing with children with addiction. Even those who are fortunate enough to get treatment often end up on the streets just because there are no ongoing support programs, minimal effort for skill training, no housing, and in many cases, no family support. Unless all these aspects are addressed, the focus on giving more drugs to addicts will not improve the carnage that we see today on the streets.

How many more families must suffer the loss of loved ones before the NDP government takes meaningful action with a comprehensive approach to address this crisis? At some point, we need to ask why the NDP government refuses to see what everybody else is seeing.

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

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THE VERY MANY WAYS THE CLIMATE SCAM NARRATIVE ISN'T ALIGNING WITH THE FACTS

Much of the U.S. was frosted and frozen by bitter winter weather in December of 2022. 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

THE SEEMINGLY GLOBAL WAR ON FARMERS CONTINUES: OREGON'S OMINOUS PRECEDENT

In recent years, stories of small farmers facing regulatory crackdowns have become distressingly common.

From stringent environmental regulations to invasive government oversight, the challenges seem insurmountable. The state of Oregon once celebrated for its agricultural richness, now finds itself at the center of a controversy emblematic of a broader assault on farming livelihoods.

Oregon's farmers, particularly small-scale operators, are facing unprecedented threats to their survival. The state government has embarked on a crusade under the guise of water conservation and groundwater protection. Using satellite technology, authorities identify farms and send cease-and-desist letters, effectively halting operations.

At the heart of this onslaught are two laws: the redefinition of confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and stringent water usage regulations. The redefinition broadens CAFOs to encompass any facility with concrete or gravel flooring, impacting not just dairy farmers but also chicken and goat keepers. This overreach is exemplified by the case of Sarah King, whose modest milking stand led to an exorbitant $100,000 infrastructure demand.

Similarly alarming is Oregon's regulation of water usage. While rainwater remains exempt from permits, all groundwater is deemed a public resource. Small farmers, like Christina Del Campo with her half-acre market garden, are caught in a bureaucratic nightmare. Despite minimal water consumption, they face shutdowns for lack of permits, hindering their ability to grow and sell produce.

Oregon's actions reflect a broader trend of government overreach, masquerading as environmental stewardship. By weaponizing regulations, officials stifle independent farming operations, jeopardizing food sovereignty and economic independence. This assault on small farmers extends beyond Oregon's borders, echoing in other states grappling with similar issues.

The ramifications are dire. Farmers, the backbone of our food system, face extinction as oppressive regulations suffocate their livelihoods. The loss of over 200,000 farms since 2000 underscores the urgency of the situation. With each shutdown, communities lose access to fresh, locally grown produce, exacerbating food insecurity and reliance on industrial agriculture.

Behind the veneer of conservation lies a systemic attack on farmers' rights and freedoms. Oregon's policies set a dangerous precedent, emboldening other states to enact similarly draconian measures. The implications are profound, threatening the very fabric of our agricultural landscape.

In the face of this assault, advocacy and resistance are paramount. Farmers and their allies must unite to challenge oppressive regulations, safeguarding their livelihoods and the future of sustainable agriculture. It's a battle for more than just farms; it's a fight for food sovereignty, environmental stewardship, and the preservation of our agricultural heritage.

As Oregon's farmers wage this uphill battle, the world watches, recognizing the significance of their struggle in the broader context of the global war on farmers. The outcome will reverberate far beyond the fields of Oregon, shaping the future of farming for generations to come.



BUS SHELTERS TO BE REMOVED AMIDST PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

The CVRD board of directors appeared distressed and frustrated while voting to remove two bus shelters, one on James St. and the other next to London Drugs at the Village Green Mall in Duncan, during the CVRD meeting on March 27th.

During the meeting, some participants, like North Cowichan's councillor, Debra Toporowski, extensively discussed the issue of the "unhoused". However, it seemed that nobody was willing to acknowledge the reality that these shelters were not being removed because a homeless individual was using them for shelter. Instead, they had to be removed due to the significant costs incurred by BC Transit to clean, remove syringes, and disinfect them. Furthermore, buses were unable to stop at these locations due to safety concerns and incidents of violence. It's important to recognize that if an older gentleman was "unhoused" and sleeping in the bus shelter, it wouldn't pose an issue. The truth is that these shelters are being removed because they are being taken over by people who use drugs.

During the CVRD meeting, it was mentioned that the owners of the property near London Drugs had also removed planter boxes and benches.

Quamichan School is currently under quasi-lockdown, with no students allowed to leave the property for lunch,



Photo: James Street Bus Shelter - Cowichan Secondary School (CVRD)

and now bus stops are being removed. Local governments are writing letters and appealing to the province for assistance. When will this cycle end? There are two distinct issues at play here: homelessness (referred to as "unhoused") and addiction. These issues cannot be treated as the same.

The province has shifted the responsibility for managing these problems onto local governments, from establishing safe injection sites to providing "transition" houses, and then seemingly abandoned them without providing adequate resources to address the issues effectively.

As neighbourhoods near these "transition houses" become increasingly unsafe, often referred to as "death houses" due to the high number of deaths occurring within them, it appears that the only solution offered is to increase local taxes for more policing and bylaw enforcement.

The "transition houses" are categorized as "wet housing," meaning drugs can be used on the premises. Unfortunately, this puts individuals at greater risk of harm, as they often use drugs alone and are more vulnerable to overdoses.

A former security team member who worked at Comox's "transition house" (Comox Valley Connects) reached out to share that within the five years since its opening, out of the 50 individuals housed there, 32 have passed away. While not all deaths occurred within the facility, this track record shows a significant failure in providing effective assistance. The former security officer also shared that between March 11th and 17th alone, there were 10 overdoses reported, many of which required multiple doses of naloxone for revival. Shockingly, all individuals refused ambulance transportation to receive further medical care. The source also highlighted the blatant drug trade occurring right outside the facility, as well as where the 'safe supply' is handed out and then sold immediately for harder street drugs.

We heard from a recovering addict who stated they would never use the "transition housing" due to the presence of dealers and users, which could easily trigger a relapse, showing the lack of suitable options available for individuals completing rehabilitation programs.

The system is undeniably broken, failing both those in desperate need of help and those striving to protect their communities. Members of the CVRD and North Cowichan are urging locals to voice their concerns to the Province in hopes of prompting action. The experiment the Province has taken part in, from legalizing drugs to selling "safe supply" has utterly failed. All the experiment has shown was that people are dying at record rates, there are not enough detox facilities, three-month rehabs need the option to be longer, 'wet housing' is a failure as is "safe supply", neighbourhoods are being destroyed, and crime rates are exploding. Time to shut the human experiment down.

The CVRD confirmed during the board meeting on April 10th, a letter was sent to the Minister of Public Safety, Minister of Transporation and Infrastructure, Minister of Housing and Minister of Municipal Affairs to request support and to raise awareness of the negative collateral effects of the housing and addiction crisis.

- Staff

A NURSE'S EXODUS: SYSTEMIC FAILURES AMID A PANDEMIC

In 2020, news of an impending pandemic came in from foreign countries.

I was a new nurse working on a surgical floor in Duncan. Despite only graduating from nursing school recently, I was frequently the most senior on the floor and took the role of charge nurse, as we worked very understaffed shifts. Although I was pregnant during the COVID-19 outbreak, I embraced my duties at the hospital, even offering to work on the "COVID unit" if need be. Word of a vaccine went out, and being a cautious mom-to-be, I did not want to get the vaccine. When I went on maternity leave, I soon heard that the vaccination would be mandatory to come back to work. In a last-minute decision, I left the country with my young family to work in a state in the US that was happy to get my skill set, without requiring me to put medication in my body that was experimental. My floor lost over a dozen skilled professionals. I cannot explain to you the devastation in the hospitals because of these mandates. My friends, from my old floor, tell me about patients being found cold and dead in their beds in the morning, because they were not able to be checked on properly. Patients are unable to get the support they need to palliate comfortably. Patients with broken bones languish, developing sores and infections because the nurses do not have the time to turn them. This system was broken when I worked there, with staffing being a huge issue. I cannot imagine the horrors that nursing staff and patients experienced after thousands of healthcare workers were fired. This lunacy does not save lives. The staffing crisis that this has caused has caused thousands to suffer and die. I was not fired. I don't count in the numbers. I resigned. The last line of my resignation letter outlining my concerns and frustration reads, "I will not be returning to my job in March. I would say, your loss, but actually, the patient's loss." Shockingly, this rings as true 3 years later, as it did then.

Rachel Bekeza RN





SOMEONE'S ALWAYS WATCHING...

IT'S US, WE'RE WATCHING.

Duncan:

April 2024

Within the CAO report it was stated that the White Rd. "supportive housing" project which was delayed due to the original builder filing bankruptcy, will now be taken over by Knappett Projects Inc. to be finished late 2024.

A 5-story, 52-unit assisted living building was approved for Evan's St.

Construction for bike lanes on Coronation St. is to start in the fall of 2024.

Two story 11000 sqft primary care centre owned by Island Health to be built at 940 Government St near Canco Grocery and behind The Fishbowl Cafe.(Motion Passed none opposed)

CVRD:

April 2024

Revisited their public speaking protocol to 15 min max, only to be extended with 3/4 voted to extend to max half hour.

The Chair and directors had a lengthy discussion around a 'Safe Spaces' bylaw to keep the Directors safe from the public that is growing ever louder by the day.

CVRD voted to remove two bus shelters after a presentation by BC Transit. Read more about that in this edition.

Mayor Douglas advised the Minister of Transportation is coming to North Cowichan to review the pedestrian overpass proposed at the new High School site. Based on feedback provided, it sounds as though they may advocate for building the bypass as originally proposed, despite public opposition.

North Cowichan:

March/April 2024

Staff recommended that N.C. allocate 40k from their Climate Action and Energy Fund (local .5% tax for the past 10 years charged to North Cowichan Residence) to supplement retrofitting of homes, to top-up the Provinces' grants. Cllr. Findlay expressed that he agreed with a speaker from the public who stated that low-income people would not be able to afford to retrofit even with the 'grants', therefore this was essentially taxpayers paying for those with the means to retrofit. Motion passed (Cllr. Findlay, Cllr. Manhas, and Cllr. Caljouw opposed)

Staff recommended taking the current Safer Community Plan and sending it back to staff to create a new one that addresses the growing addiction and crime, especially along the corridor and work in collaboration with businesses that are affected. (none opposed)

Cllr. Findlay brought forward three motions to be debated on April 17th. 1. The mayor wrote a letter to Dr. Henry and Minister Dix to end the vaccine mandates and invite 400 nurses back to work to help our healthcare crisis. 2. That Mayor write a letter to create a more lenient liquor licencing program for restaurants so that it is not site-specific but honours the establishment. Also, that entry level wages for students be amended to not have to meet full min wage requirements. 3. A motion that staff amend the step code 4 building bylaw passed earlier in the year that saw all new builds have to meet step code 4 6 years before the province requires these measures.

Committee Of The Whole: Motion to change public question period practices to 30 seconds each person with a max of 15 min all together. Taking into account that the replies to the public would also take about 30 seconds - that would end up being 15 people which would account for .04 % of the population. Motion passed to place this item on the next regular meeting. Also in this motion was to move public speaking to before the delegations, and to keep with the 5-speaker limit, unless voted on by a majority to extend the speakers list.

NORTH COWICHAN COUNCIL CONFRONTED BY UNEXPECTED ESTUARY DILEMMA

Unraveling the Continued Complex Saga of Cowichan Bay's Controversial Estuary Plan

As the story of the Cowichan Bay Estuary and the Dinsdale Farm continues to peel apart like an onion, each layer exposing the deeper story, we will continue to cover this saga until the day there is some sort of 'ending'.



Cowichan Bay Estuary - WWIND File Photo

As we have written at length, the Cowichan Bay Estuary has become a hot topic in the Valley, with some members of the public championing the 'restoration' narrative, while others have taken on the battle to fight the flooding of 180 acres of prime farmland that sits in the Estuary. Much of this contention to the flooding was obvious when farmers filled the roads outside the CVRD building the day that a meeting was held to decide if the CVRD was going to send a letter to the Agricultural Land Commission on Nature Trust's (the owner of the land) behalf. Many layers have been exposed from emails between Nature Trust and staff at the CVRD, to Ministers that seem to also have been involved. As discussed in last month's article on the topic, one theme seems to be occurring, elected officials seemed to have no idea about the project. Last month we brought forward a breakdown from the Freedom Of Information (FOIA) documents that centred around the CVRD. This month we have now received over 200 pages from more FOIA documents regarding North Cowichan's involvement, or lack of.

From the documents we can see that in late December 2022 and Jan 2023 Goetz Schuerholz, Chair of the Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Association (CERCA) is sending Council emails that lay out what council should do to abide by World Diversity Forum's goals of 30% of land and 30% of water strictly protected (from people) by 2030, an odd ask of a country with 70% of land basically uninhabited. This Forum works in conjunction with the United Nations COP meetings. The meetings are sponsored by such global "nature protectors" as Nestle, Capgenini Invent, Cathay Financial Investments, SNC-Lavalin and more. Geotz,is the owner of TAESCO Transamerica Environmental Science Consultants Ltd. just one of the many companies that sell consulting and research around "sustainability" to private companies globally. TAESCO sells its services to entities such as Line Creek Resources Ltd., a multi-national coal-mining company, Canadian Forest Services, Shell International Ltd. the World Bank, and the BC government. The point of his emails was asking to put the Estuary and 6 mountains (North Cowichan's 5k hectare forest) into a "protected zone" to abide by this 30 by 30 "agreement" - an agreement which has no legal standing, and is tantamount to a pinky promise at best.

Then on March 1st 2023 Council passed the following motion,: "THAT the Mayor write a letter to the Province requesting that the Province, in consultation with affected stakeholders, amend the 1987 Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan to reflect the current scientific knowledge of the role of estuaries in the ecosystem, land ownership and uses, and climate change; AND to request support from Cowichan Tribes, Cowichan Valley Regional District, City of Duncan, Cowichan Estuary and Restoration and Conservation Association (CERCA)."

After this motion was passed, multiple forms of the letter to be sent to the Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, and was passed between staff and finally to the Mayor for approval. The letter consisted of asking Minister Cullen to: "Request to update the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan. In 2022, North Cowichan Council endorsed a report from Diamond Head Consulting recommending that the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan (CEEMP) be updated." from the last plan from the ministry that was dated 1987. Even though, according to the multi-agency Cowichan Estuary Environment Management Committee; "The state of the estuary and the ecological and management issues were reviewed in the 2005 Review of the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan, and in the 2010 presentation entitled Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan Review 2010 Update", it seemed Council was looking for an update to be done by the Provincial Ministry.



According to the 1987 Cowichan Estuary Environmental Plan, it was not seen to be needing any amendments in the foreseeable future, unless there were justifications for the changes based on vast changes to the area, and if it were amended to include consultation with all neighbouring properties - which we know still has not happened. Diamond Head Consulting noted that the old plan: "continues to reference old agreements and legislation, industrial parties that no longer exist, and does not include new parties that have since become active in the Estuary. Diamond Head also identified other areas of concern that have changed significantly since 1986, e.g.,,sea level rise and changing; precipitation/river discharge patterns;- the physical boundaries and ecological community of the estuary; consultation with First Nations has changed; and,- the use of the estuary as a moorage for Port Metro Vancouver."

In early April 2023 letters were then sent to: Chief Cindy Daniels-Cowichan Tribes, Michelle Staples- Mayor of the City of Duncan, Aaron Stone - Chair, Cowichan Valley Regional District, and Dr. Goetz Schuerholz, Chair, Cowichan Estuary and Restoration and Conservation Association to: "consider providing a letter of support for our request to the Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, to update the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan"

On May 13th 2023 an email was received from the office of the Minister stating "Dear Mayor Douglas: Please see attached letter regarding some of the current challenges in the Cowichan Estuary, and your request to amend the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan (CEEMP)."

Within the attachment, it seemed the Minister did not feel a full plan was needed, or maybe he knew something others' did not? "I understand that prior reviews of the CEEMP in 2005 and 2010 highlighted several positive outcomes of the plan as well as some areas for improvement. As a starting point I will look to regional staff to review those prior reports and work with the CEEMC to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing plan. In the interim, please continue to work with Jesse Patterson, Ecosystems Section Head, Land Use Policy, Planning and Ecosystems Division, as the Chair of the CEEMC on any short-term process improvements"

On May 19th 2023 Mayor Douglas wrote to CAO Swabey in response to the letter from the Ministers office: "In terms of next steps, I am thinking municipal staff should contact Jesse Paterson (chair of the Estuary committee) to discuss timelines for provincial staff to review prior reports and to bring this topic forward as an future estuary committee meeting."

On May 24th 2023 Thomas Reid, of Nature Trust, writes in to thank staff for allowing him to present on future plans for the estuary the week before. The same Tom Reid that has an @ naturetrust AND an @gov.bc.ca email address, who has not yet responded to our queries as to why this is.

When it looks as if staff and the Mayor are going to slowly look into the whole topic at a future date, all of a sudden the Citizen newspaper breaks the news, as does the Estuary Resilience website regarding the flooding of the farmland and the dike removals. The staff are caught off guard as North Cowichan's head engineer sends an email to N.C.'s Environmental Programs Coordinator, stating "Will you look at this!!! Where is the communication.", the reply being: "First I've heard of it ! Looks like it's Tom Reid's group. Maybe Dave P was aware, but this is the first I've heard of it from anyone."

Coincidentally, or not, in May of 2023, less than a month before the 'big reveal' of the real plan, Nature Trust was granted $3,493,975 by the Federal Government's "BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund projects" to top off their 2019 grant set to run out March 2024 of $8,552,415 to: "'Enhancing Estuary Resilience: An Innovative Approach to Sustaining Fish and Fish Habitat in a Changing Climate'

Under "partner quotes" for the project we see the same Minister who North Cowichan had spent a month formulating a letter and gathering support for a letter to, and who had told North Cowichan that there were some issues with their request, and indicated they may not need a whole new plan was now stated as saying: "Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship shares, "We are delighted to collaborate on this project to restore the natural estuarine marshlands in the Cowichan Estuary. Our government is committed to the sustainable management and protection of water resources in B.C., and this project aligns perfectly with our goals. By restoring the natural marshland, we are enhancing the ecological health of this important ecosystem and improving the water quality of the surrounding areas. This project will set an excellent example for the preservation of Canada's aquatic ecosystems, and we are proud to be a part of it. We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts and seeing the positive impact of this project on the Cowichan Estuary and the communities that rely on it." Interesting change of tune by the Minister, stay tuned.

As soon as this flooding was announced, a direct neighbour of the estuary sprang into action and created a non profit called Land Keepers, and with help from volunteers, COAP Inc. also stepped in to help with FOIA's and Town halls, Land Keepers retained lawyers, and began the long fight to save the Farmland. While still fighting the flooding, Land Keepers has also expanded to fight alongside other farmers all over the province battling water rights and more. Land Keepers Society is a non-profit run entirely by devoted volunteers and all the money raised goes to unbiased independent scientific studies and lawyers. You can support LK by becoming a member, a volunteer, or donating. We must stand up and protect one another in this time of irrational measures.

Visit www.landkeeperssociety.com or call Jack McLeod at 587-991-5452 if you would like to receive correspondence by mail.

*** FOI Document available on our website at www.wwind.ca**
A. Richards







FROM CONSPIRACY TO OPEN ADVOCACY BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



As we witness local policies being rammed down the throats of locals, coupled with technological advancements, and global agendas, a disquieting reality unfolds—one meticulously crafted to surveil, control, and confine.

What was once dismissed as mere conspiracy theory is now openly championed by local governments and embraced by some radicalized factions of the population, propelling us towards a 15-minute, track-and-trace future where every aspect of our lives is subject to scrutiny and regulation, and where 'you will own nothing and be happy'

Under the guise of sustainability, equity and efficiency, local governments champion urban planning initiatives that promise livability and convenience within compact urban areas. The concept of 15-minute cities, once considered fringe, is now celebrated as the pinnacle of modern urban design. However, the implementation of such initiatives often comes at the cost of individual freedom and mobility. Zoning bylaws are redrawn to prioritize high-density development, pushing residents into tightly packed urban centers where every aspect of life is meticulously planned and regulated.

Some ideas come in the form of narrowing roads to discourage private car ownership and restrict individual mobility, while initiatives to promote pedestrian-friendly infrastructure hope to confine residents within the confines of their walkable neighbourhoods, even when the majority of people, as in the Cowichan Valley, commute. The utopia of us all living within 15 minutes and working within walking distance, leaves out the glaringly obvious lack of thought - who supplies these 15-minute ghettos with all the amenities? Certainly, all the amenities such as food must be brought in from afar, negating any so-called 'climate solution'. Additionally, studies have shown that living in high-density neighbourhoods can have detrimental effects on mental health, increasing stress levels and feelings of social isolation. The lack of green spaces, family neighbourhoods, backyards, and communal areas exacerbates these issues, creating environments that are conducive to anxiety and depression.

Technological advancements, once viewed with suspicion, now form the backbone of surveillance infrastructure that enables control and monitoring on an unprecedented scale. Smart city initiatives, propelled by the Internet of Things (IoT), create an interconnected web of sensors and surveillance cameras that monitor every aspect of urban life. Street lights, once merely illuminating pathways, now can serve as covert surveillance tools with monitoring attachments that can include cameras, emission sensors and microphones, which will enable authorities to track movements and identify individuals, vehicles, sound and emissions in real time. Moreover, these streetlights can communicate seamlessly with other smart devices, such as surveillance cameras, smart meters and IoT sensors, creating a networked grid of surveillance that blankets entire urban areas.

In addition to street lights and surveillance cameras, the monitoring infrastructure extends to utility usage, including smart meters installed in homes. These meters track energy consumption patterns, providing authorities with detailed insights into residents' daily activities and routines. As local governments gradually remove alternative heat sources, such as wood-burning stoves, and gas and oil furnaces, and transition towards centralized heating systems, electricity usage becomes a key component of the monitoring system.

This interconnected network of devices not only enables comprehensive data collection but also facilitates the consolidation of power and control in the hands of local governments and third-party entities. The data harvested from these devices can be leveraged to profile individuals, predict behaviour, and exert influence over populations, all while infringing upon our right to privacy and autonomy.

While urban planning initiatives and technological advancements disproportionately impact marginalized communities, it's crucial to recognize that these policies are not solely driven by local interests. They are part of a broader global agenda that prioritizes corporate profits and centralized control over individual rights and freedoms. Gentrification, once challenged by grassroots movements, is now embraced as a sign of progress and development.

While surveillance and control mechanisms are being implemented on a physical level, the transition towards a subscription-based society is quietly underway. The mantra "You Will Own Nothing and Be Happy" is gradually becoming a reality as individuals increasingly subscribe to services rather than owning physical goods. Subscription-based models, exemplified by platforms like Spotify and Microsoft Word, offer convenience and flexibility at the expense of ownership. Instead of purchasing music albums or software licenses, individuals pay recurring fees for access to vast libraries of content. While this shift may seem innocuous, it erodes the concept of ownership and control, relegating individuals to mere consumers in a world where access trumps possession. As the subscription-based economy expands its reach, individuals become increasingly dependent on corporations for access to essential goods and services. The notion of ownership is replaced by transient access, leaving individuals vulnerable to price hikes, service interruptions, and arbitrary terms of use dictated by corporate entities.

The erosion of ownership doesn't stop with digital content. Increased taxation can make homeownership increasingly unattainable for the average citizen. Moreover, the separation of utility costs, such as water, from yearly taxes, as exemplified by North Cowichan's approach, makes it easier for municipalities to raise prices on water usage, place fines on contaminated recycling, and increase these fees separate from the yearly taxes at a whim. By combining increased fees and property taxes with soon-to-be bylaws mandating forced retrofitting of homes to meet environmental standards, we see more direct threats to homeownership. Forced retrofitting could saddle homeowners with exorbitant costs, leading to financial instability and potential loss of their homes. Additionally, under bills like BC Bills 44-47, BC Assessment could appraise properties not for their current use, but for their potential use under new regulations, further jeopardizing homeowners' ability to retain their properties.

These initiatives infringe upon our fundamental rights, as enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The right to freedom of movement, once considered sacrosanct, is now undermined by policies that restrict individual mobility, right to security of person, and autonomy. Similarly, the right to privacy is compromised by pervasive surveillance and data collection practices.

Challenging these infringements requires collective action and advocacy for the protection of our rights and freedoms. By remaining vigilant and resisting the encroachment of global agendas that prioritize control over individual autonomy, we can strive towards a future that honours the principles of democracy, justice, and freedom for all. For in the defense of our rights lies the hope of reclaiming agency over our lives and shaping a future that prioritizes the well-being and dignity of every individual.

Visit coap.ca for more citizen-led action.

- A. Richards





CASTOR OIL PACKS: OR, REGULATING THE BODY POLITIC.

While it is an understandable misconception (especially for Canucks), castor oil does not actually come from beavers, though unlike other, not uncommon, misapprehensions of reality, it is safe and often effective.

Similarly, the blood sugar spiking treat. The "Beavertail", made famous by Hooker's (not the professional variety) at Winterlude in, ground zero for misapprehensions of reality, Ottawa, is not a beaver by-product either. This will be reassuring for many, no doubt. What does lead one to wonder, is why those in charge of land and water management in the Cowichan Valley do not, with greater alacrity, follow the lead of Canada's trusty and industrious mascot, castor canadensis, to slow melt and other water on its return to the great sea, thereby mitigating summer drought and fire conditions, but that question will have to be addressed another day. Now that the question of whether this article is a chat gpt fabrication has been fully addressed, on to many things castor oil!

Grown primarily in the Gujarat region of western India, but also in China, Brazil and some other warm climates, production is labour intensive and, due to its many useful properties, the vast majority of castor oil is used in industry, including in the production of bio-diesel fuel. Extraction from the seeds of the spikey "fruit" provides some challenges as the seeds are not only rich in the unique and beneficial compound, ricinoleic acid (RA), but also contain the powerful toxin, ricin. As such, chewing the seeds is not recommended! Being one of the earliest documented cultivated crops going back to ancient Egypt, one might reasonably assume it was well appreciated and widely used for a variety of purposes. Recent years have seen a resurgence in popularity in its use amongst those looking for natural, time-tested, home health remedies.

As always, use for health purposes is best served with the highest quality oils. As with other oils for bodily use, these should be, most importantly, solvent/hexane-free! Next in order of importance



comes cold-pressed. Lastly, organic and dark-coloured, glass container round out the list of desired properties. Due to ever-increasing demand and the seasonal variability of crop yields due to its relatively limited production, finding a product fulfilling all these criteria may not always be possible or, may, potentially, be cost prohibitive. Oil sold in plastic containers can always be transferred to glass receptacles, if use is not expected to be timely. This is important as one of castor oil's useful properties is that it easily passes accompanying components, desirable and otherwise, through skin and other membranes.

Supporting immune function would be a catchall descriptor for what makes castor oil so attractive to so many, not to mention the benefits for hair and skin by which many swear to increase their attractiveness. While the best known traditional use may be as a laxative taken internally, the latest rage has championed the ever-popular castor oil pack, which does also benefit many in the function of elimination. Generally placed over the liver on the right side of the abdomen, it may also be used on the left of the abdomen over the intestines, on the neck over the thyroid and over the eyes. There is even one story of a doctor in San Francisco some decades ago who had success treating a variety of untreatables using much larger, up to whole-body, oil packs. He was allegedly shut down for the usual reasons. In India, some are even reputed to cover their whole bodies in oil and then sunbathe for 30 minutes or so. Obviously this should be undertaken with appropriate caution and likely not at the peak of sun intensity. This protocol is unlikely to be beneficial for the sun-sensitive!

While castor oil packs may be purchased from a variety of sources at varying cost, they are easily put together with relatively common items. Purchased or home-created, oil packs generally consist of a cotton or wool flannel that is saturated with 1 TSP to TBSP or more oil, depending on the size of pack and left in place for at least an hour, if not overnight. New fabric being used would best be organic, though one would assume that old, un-dyed, flannel sheets or clothing, if washed with natural soap and well rinsed, will serve the purpose equally effectively. A hot water bottle or other heat source will likely increase the oil's absorption and benefits of the procedure, not to mention keep the recipient warm on a cold winter's night. Some kind of covering is best applied to the outside face of the fabric as castor oil does stain quite indelibly. For many, using medical tape to hold a sheet of plastic or an old plastic bag in place over top will be the cheapest and most effective method of controlling undesired oil leakage. Otherwise, it is not unwise to use old towels to mitigate superfluous oil contact.

Now, it is also said that one may forego the saturation of the cloth and simply apply the oil liberally to the desired area and cover or not, as desired, depending on circumstances. This will result in using much less oil, without sacrificing much in the way of benefits. It is also noted that washing the pack used in such manner will require much less effort and "elbow grease." One may simply reapply oil should it be deemed necessary. Being that castor oil packs are not considered to be a "one and done" protocol, many people make them a regular part of their ongoing health regimen. Generally, this follows the methodology of skin and hair uses. Repeated use over time will yield the best results and serve to prevent future undesired symptomatology. Castor oil may be blended with many other oils and constituents to achieve desired results. There is a plethora of information on the interweb with many simple, but detailed formulations, often consisting of other household items, ranging from bananas to stimulate hair growth, to egg yoke for a facial mask.

Castor oil's penetrating capacity is said to benefit the lymphatic system which runs in tandem with the circulatory system. This differs from Klaus Schwab's penetration of world government leadership, in that it helps to remove waste products and ultimately improves circulation of elements necessary for a healthy body, politic or otherwise, rather than concentrating and distilling said toxic by-products to achieve the most nefarious and dis-harmonious results. One may infer that more people benefiting themselves with castor oil's multitudinous benefits would serve to decrease general dependence on the "health care" system leading to less need for the "legitimized" theft known as taxation, as unlikely as that seems to ever come to pass. Perhaps nightly castor oil packs should be conditional to serving in political office to ensure the elimination function is maximally efficient, so that politicians are less likely to achieve their usual state. Food for thought!

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





Dear WWIND,

As a young man in the 1960's, I worked in Port Renfrew for BC Forest Products. The town's main economy was forestry, some commercial fishing and buying, and the Pacheedaht First Nations community. When BC Forest Products shut down their operations, Port Renfrew turned into a near ghost town. Most of the houses were boarded up and the town was a very sad sight.

The town strove mightily to rethink itself and build a tourist industry: sports fishing, sightseeing and Mile 0 of the West Coast Trail.

A marina and campsite started in the old log sort as the word got out about the wonderful fishing. Another marina started behind the government wharf and Renfrew Hotel, and a new marina started down the waterfront from the hotel. The boards came off of the windows of the houses in the townsite and it became a thriving community again. Now with one ill thought press release the government is trying to drive the community back to its knees!

This newest closure will gut Port Renfrew's economy, force what few fishermen and fishing guides left to travel long distances up the coast, burning a lot more fuel into the environment as well as greatly increasing the chance for marine fatalities. We are told in the press release that it is to save the resident killer whales from starving. We also read a lot of opposing science on the subject but very little science from the Department of Fisheries supporting this rash move.

One thing for sure; they will kill a thriving coastal community and a 26 MILLION dollar a year economy!

Imagine if the federal government took the billions of dollars they squandered on Arrive Can, Firearms Buy Back, Contractors creating government propaganda, a Management Payroll almost as large as the workers payroll, government MPs jetting all over the world, and now raises for MPs, and spent that money on building fish hatcheries and restocking our creeks and rivers! We would have a coast teeming with fish, very happy fat whales and thriving communities up and down our coast. It seems like a no brainer.

There is a Petition e-4913 that was written by Charles Borg with input from the people who will be severely impacted by the threatened closure. Please sign this important petition that is found at: **wind.ca/4913**

Sincerely, John

Dear WWIND,

Re: Jordan River Solar Farm Project

I wish to register my concerns regarding the Jordan River Solar Farm Project, where 581 acres of trees are to be cut. Rather than allow the further desecration of our over-logged forests, especially on Vancouver Island, to concentrate solar power in one area, it would be preferable to help local residents install solar panels on their properties to take the burden off the grid and concomitantly lower individual hydro bills. Removal of more trees is part of the climate change problem, because trees absorb carbon, which are the very emissions being blamed for climate change. Moreover, trees maintain the integrity of the landscape, preventing landslides. Trees also retain water in the ground, preventing evaporation and drought.

Humans have thoughtlessly and continuously clear cut our forests for so long that our planet is now lacking in its natural protection. At the same time, Canadian trees are being exported for other countries to stockpile them, when Canadians can no longer afford to build homes. If a solar farm were to be built here, let it be on lands that are already clear-cut, of which there are plenty, regrettably, on Vancouver Island.

Lavonne Garnett

Dear WWIND,

Reading the Times Colonist article on March 16, 2024, where Premier Eby calls Pierre Poilievre's letter asking Eby to drop the carbon tax as it is inflationary. Eby response that Pierre's letter was "a baloney factory" made me think I was listening to a debate when I was in junior high school. Suggesting that BC residents get more money in rebates than they spend on Carbon Tax is poorly thought out as well as being untrue.

The inflationary results of Carbon Tax doesn't stop at the gas station. Let's look at food. The farmer has a large carbon tax bill, then the trucker to the processor pays a lot of carbon tax. The processor pays carbon tax. Then again, the trucker moving the processed food to the wholesaler pays carbon tax. Then the trucker moves food from the wholesaler to the retail stores and pays yet more carbon tax. Then there is the carbon tax on heating the retail stores! This keeps multiplying the carbon tax over and over and over again. Pretty much the same formula applies to all manufactured goods we buy.

The glib comments from politicians such as Premier Dave Eby that it only affects the rich is far from reality. There is real pain going on with the application of these Carbon Taxes on the ordinary people of BC and of Canada.

It is time we had a common sense government who will kill these taxes and allow some prosperity to come back for the citizens of Canada.

J. Money



As the Westward Independent slowly makes its way into other communities on the island, we will expand to include stories from these communities, as well as locals who 'council watch' as we do. Here is one of those folks from our neighbour to the north.

PORT SIDE REFLECTIONS

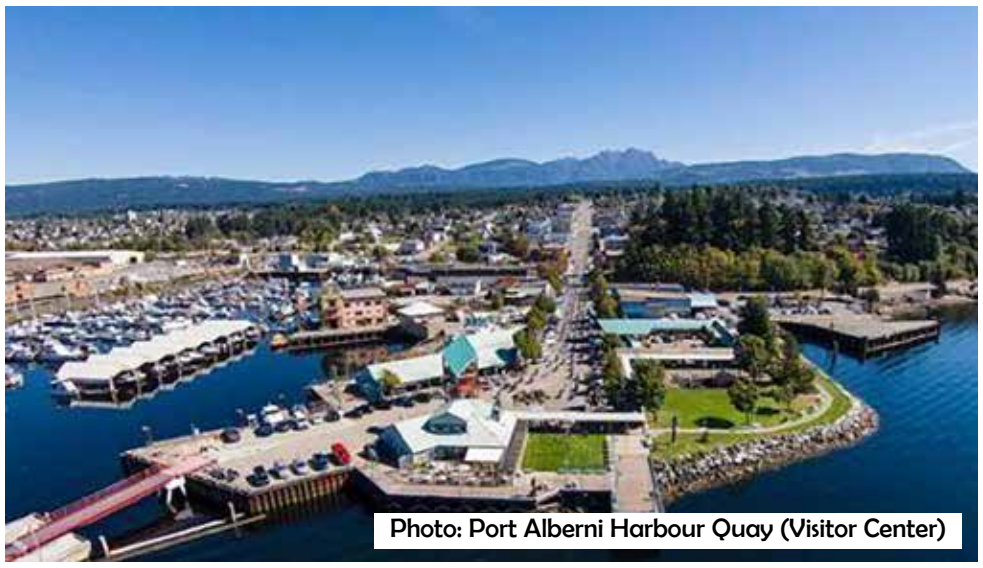


Photo: Port Alberni Harbour Quay (Visitor Center)

Going through my notes to write on City of Port Alberni Council Meetings, it astounded me as to how long I have been following the municipal gatherings and how educational it has been for me.

I come from Ottawa and have since for the past decades avoided politics as that was an everyday discussion in that city and quite frankly - it bored me. And then COVID appeared and as I woke up to the world around me, I became interested in how this city's politics is being run. I also have more time presently as I was one of those fired healthcare workers three years ago.

I was rather naive at the start of attending council meetings and thought the mayor and councillors cared about their city but with further studies I noticed that most of municipal affairs is basically a money-run organization focussed on provincial (tax-payers) grants to effectively guide the city into a 15-Minute prison.

Several residents in 2023 asked the mayor, at City Council meetings, if Port Alberni was going to become a 15-Minute City or A Smart City with the answer being NO. Then the City of Port Alberni published their 2024 - 2028 Corporate (yes we are a corporation) Strategic Plan with, oh yes, A Complete Community.

In May of 2023, then head of the West Coast General Hospital, Dr. Lambiotte, spoke with Council on the healthcare crisis here in Port Alberni. "Beautify the town to entice workers to come," he said. A resulting answer was the city is putting a quay-to-quay path that is sometimes on the waterfront through and around the mill which will help beautify the area with tree plantations going along the paths - all of which is funded by governmental grants - our tax dollars. Dr. Lambiotte spoke at two council meetings that I am aware of. The mayor acknowledged the healthcare crisis and would bring it to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Convention.

At the October 16, 2023 Council Meeting, Mayor Sharie Minions, was commenting happily on meeting personally with the Minister of Health at the UBCM convention, hence, at question period, I asked her if she mentioned anything to the Minister about rehiring the fired healthcare workers of which has been a big contention at council meetings. After all, this would alleviate the crisis in many of the hospitals. After a pause, Mayor Minions told the crowd that "It was not on the agenda."

Then Dr. Ingrid Pincott and Dr. Anna Kindy spoke to the Campbell River (CR) council about the healthcare crisis in that city and spoke about Bill 36 of which a story was published in the Westward Independent Issue No.10. Campbell River Mayor Kermit Dahl spoke that he wished other cities to group together for a larger voice in the fight to help the healthcare crisis.

Hence, I approached Port Alberni Council with information on Bill 36 and a link to the CR delegation so that our council could perhaps join in the fight to help the critical care in hospitals that is affecting everyone. As Dr. Kindy said "It is not a good time to be sick."

Two weeks later, I asked all council members if they watched the 30-minute podcast. All with disinterested faces acknowledged they did NOT watch the show and were not communicating with CR Mayor. Hence, the hospital crisis will certainly continue further with little support from this council.

Activity at City Council meetings in March of 2024 was up in attendance with the broadcast of a 16.8%increase in this year's city taxes. One resident commented on how the taxpayers will agree with the increase once it is reduced and voila, after reconfigurating some figures, it was reduced to 12.48%. The next council meeting held a few people with little mention about the 12.48% increase.

At the last council meeting, I brought information about the new documentary "Climate The Movie." On my allotted question period, I asked if they would watch the documentary. The mayor said, "Oh, I believe we can watch this documentary," with councillor Charles Mealey agreeing. I await the response at the next meeting.

I feel my efforts are not wasted and my time put in matters as I know that council meetings are aired on YouTube thus the world can view how council sits with decisions and about how the UN could be silently encroaching through our governmental systems to overpower our freedoms.

By Charlaine Lacroix, Port Alberni

MP GORD JOHNS WAS DISPLEASED AS PROTESTORS VOICED THEIR OPINION ON HIS SIGNING ONTO THE 23% CARBON TAX INITIATIVE.

Port Alberni protestors face NDP MP Gord Johns at the Friendship Center, Sunday, March 23, 2024, to voice their displeasure over MP Johns signing onto the 23% Carbon Tax that takes effect on April 1st, 2024.

MP Johns told the crowd of 15 protestors how the rich oil and gas industry is to blame for the high costs of fuel and not government tax overreach. A very distraught MP complained to the crowd as: "This is not the right place or time for a protest as I am here to help the disabled citizens of Port Alberni". Johns said, "not to discuss Carbon Tax issues".

Johns explained he would meet with any of the protestors at another time to discuss governmental issues, however, complaints were shared that mail and phone calls were most often never returned.

It was good to see citizens voice their displeasure to the MP in person over yet another tax initiative that will only impoverish more Canadians and sadly put more on the homeless route that is now a very common sight on Vancouver Island.

At least, to date, Canadians still have the right to voice their opinions and as officer Tomy Vezina said that day; "We will never stop you from protesting peacefully"





CITY OF DUNCAN REVIEWS POLICIES ON GREASED PIGS?



Duncan will be passing a motion to repeal some old bylaws on April 15th. Duncan Days is gonna be off the hook this year!

One bylaw they will be repealing is the "Greased Pig Prohibited Performance Bylaw". At first read it seems as if this were from the 40's or 50's, but no, it seems in 1990 council felt the need to pass a bylaw that stated: " A bylaw to prohibit - participants pursue, capture and/or hold animals who have been greased to elude capture, or attempt to pursue, capture and/or hold animals who have been greased to elude capture; (b) participants attempt to pursue, capture and/or hold animals who have been greased to elude capture, whether or not the same have been greased to elude capture;" Seems fair enough when thinking about animal cruelty issues, so is Duncan looking to revive this sport in the near future?

It seems in 1986 the Council was a stick-in-the-mud and passed a bylaw called the "Video Arcade Prohibition Bylaw". This bylaw stated: "VIDEO ARCADE" means an amusement arcade containing four or more video games. 2. No person shall operate or permit the operation of a video arcade in the Municipality. 3. A person who violates this bylaw commits an offence and is punishable in accordance with the Offence Act. ". I guess we can rest easy that this will now be repealed. Bring on the Pac-Man!

In 1996 Council passed a bylaw called ""Escort and Dating Service Bylaw" to charge fees and demand licensing of businesses that perform 'body rubs' and more. Some of the definitions are quite the read. "Body rub" (a) includes the manipulating, touching or stimulating, by any means, of a person's body or part of a person's body". ""body rub parlour" includes (a) a place where a body rub is performed, offered or solicited; "body massager" means a person who administers a body rub". And I must say, I have never heard of this profession being referred to as "encounter counselor means a person who carries on the business of holding or conducting an encounter session". The fees for said business were "An applicant for a license to carry on business as a body massager, an escort, an encounter counsellor or a model must pay to the City an annual license fee of $250.00."; However Duncan got a larger kickback from the Escort services at a whopping: "An applicant for a licence to carry on the business of operating an escort service, a dating service or a studio must pay to the City an annual license fee of $1,500.00." Seems Duncan wanted in on the take from the "Johns". So wait, was Duncan getting fees up until this repeal for these services?

Public input welcome, April 15, 6 PM!

Who knew reading council agendas could be so amusing at times.

Richards



WHO IS THE MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN WORKING FOR?

In 2013 North Cowichan passed a motion to join the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) a Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) initiative in partnership with ICLEI, a UN creation to monitor and steer local policy.

The CVRD also became a paid member of ICLEI in 2016. We have written to the CVRD to ask if they are still a paid member, but a month later have not received an answer. We have confirmed North Cowichan is still a member of the PCP, and at level 4 standing now, which means they have been 'reporting to' an outside agency. Are they more beholden to all these types of groups than to local constituents?

What does this free membership entail? It reads like a municipality joining a Girl Guide, or Boy Scouts group, where they prove how great they are doing, and 'get a badge'. It also reads like a bribe, as local municipalities become more and more dependent on grants, as they become less and less able to be self-sustainable - they must join these initiatives to be eligible for the handouts.

From the email to council in 2013: "Monitoring and verifying implementation progress is an ongoing process. It appears that with the adoption of the CAEP (Climate Action and Energy Plan) North Cowichan may have fulfilled and perhaps on the community level exceeded the minimum requirements of Milestone Three and is actively working towards Milestone Four. Actions required to achieve Milestone Five will be reviewed during progress toward Milestone Four."

"Membership support: FCM recognizes municipalities that have achieved PCP milestones and reduced emissions through recognition letters to council, milestone recognition events, an annual measures report and webinars showcasing their successes. In addition to recognition for milestones achieved and access to funding assistance for neighbourhood planning, feasibility studies and carbon reduction capital projects and programs, the PCP program also offers other benefits to municipalities as follows: PCP members have access to free technical support through ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. FCM funding is made available through the Green Municipal Fund for the carbon reduction activities described above. Upon joining the PCP, North Cowichan will be eligible for awards such as the FCM Sustainable Communities' Planning Award. Staff would also be eligible to apply for FCM funding for a 'Sustainable Neighborhood Action Plan' scope or component of the University Village planning process."

The end of the letter from the PCP reads like some legal agreement, though it is not one with a line such as: **"BE IT RESOLVED that the municipality of North Cowichan communicate to FCM its participation in the PCP program and its commitment to achieve the milestones set in the PCP five-milestone framework."**

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7.6. Partners for Climate Protection Program

It was moved and seconded:
that North Cowichan join the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection Program and direct staff to pursue recognition for North Cowichan's efforts on climate action.

CARRIED



So, we ask again, "Who is your municipality answering to?"
You can read more of what they ask of local governments at:
www.pcp-ppc.ca



APRIL GARDENING TIPS!

Dear Gardening Friends, what a glorious change in weather! We went from nightly frosts to fabulous sunny days that made you want to stay outside all day revelling in the warmth!

This winter with its extreme cold snap in January hurt many of my plants. I had sown Mesclun and Bok Choy in big pots in fall with the expectation of having fresh from the garden vitamins and minerals by March as I had last year. But no! 99% of the Mesclun was killed off, and out of the fairly large amount sown, only two Arugula survived. I seeded the area again in early March but I also bought starters to make up for the late start and I am babying them along to encourage faster growth. It feels wonderful to get my hands in the dirt again!

Have you ever bought starters in one of those 2"x4" pots where there are lots of seedlings but the roots are so tangled that you feel half will die when you plant due to trauma? What I do is I put a Tablespoon of Starter Pro Transplanter in a large margarine container, fill with water and mix. I then put the plants from one of these little 2"x4" pots right into this mix, removing any dirt that doesn't have roots in it. Let the plants lie in this solution for a little while and you will see them visibly relax and separate. Take the container to your garden and plant directly from it. I put the watery dirt from the container around the plants after I've finished planting. This process ensures a really good start to these little plants.

Spring is such an invigorating time. The apple and pear trees have been pruned as have the roses. The next big pruning job will be after the spring shrubbery has finished blooming.

As soon as the Heathers have finished blossoming shear them to renew growth and keep them in a nice shape. Heathers are full of bees at this time of year and they are a mainstay of a bee's diet, so don't prune until they are totally finished flowering. Heathers give you colour in the garden and look lovely planted en masse. In fact you can grow heathers year round for colour and for the benefit of all pollinizers. As well, there are winter-blooming heathers that will feed the bees on mild winter days. Rhododendrons benefit by having the blossoms snapped off immediately below the blooms as they finish blooming. Azaleas enjoy a trim to keep them in shape after their flowers have finished. I usually use my hedging shears for this job as it goes much



quicker and I find I can get the shape just right. Pieris Japonica only needs a light shearing after it has finished its bloom period.

Hellebore is another lovely winter and early spring blooming perennial. Both the Christmas and the Lenten Hellebore are great additions for the front of your garden bed. I have a small garden but have several of these must-have plants.I leave the dying flowers in place so they will seed under the skirts of their leaves. Their handsome shiny thick dark green leaves make them a good accent plant all through the season.

Give your garden a good spring clean, getting rid of weeds before they can set their seeds. Then plump up the soil with several inches of compost. I sprinkle a light dusting of dolomite lime over the veggie garden except where potatoes will grow. When planting seed potatoes, put them in bright light for a few weeks so that the sprouts will start to grow. Once the potatoes have sprouted, I cut them so that each piece has two or three sprouts. The reason I cut the potatoes is so that the potato plant's roots do not become overcrowded and tangled with less ability to draw nutrients from the surrounding soil and consequently will produce smaller potatoes. A small piece with a few eyes will have a better chance of producing bigger potatoes. I leave them to sit for a few more days until the cut part has calloused and dried. In my heavy clay soil, I like to hill potatoes, planting them in a shallow hole of only a few inches deep and then covering with dirt. As they grow up I continue to pull more soil over them to encourage lots of potatoes. If your soil is sandy, you will want to dig them in deeper, at least six inches deep. I put a little bonemeal with the potato and then wait until the upper branches are about eight inches high and then cover the plant by at least half with compost and surrounding soil. You can add shredded leaves or dry grass clippings to the soil. Keep doing this until the plant is about eighteen inches high or when the potatoes start flowering. Potatoes must grow in complete darkness so make sure your plant is well covered with soil. Green potatoes can make you sick and no one wants that!

I planted Brokali which is a cross between Broccoli and Kale. I am fond of these very hardy plants which produce lots of tender delicious flavourful side shoots, and best of all, the more you cut, the more the plants produce! I put several inches of compost over the area and then cake it with dolomite lime. What does caking mean? Covering the ground with lime so you can't see any soil. This sweetens the soil as all cabbage plant families love a sweet soil and it also deters the cabbage moth larvae. I put the starters in the ground and then put a little more lime around them. If you have Kale from last year cut it above a bud that is about six inches above the ground and use the Kale you cut to make salads, stir-fries or chips. The Kale will re-sprout again.

Peas and all of the Lettuce family can be planted now. You can interplant Lettuce amongst your Brassicas (Cabbage plant family). You will be eating the lettuce as it matures, giving the Brassicas more room to grow. I also plant Dill or Onions near Brassicas.

Start your heat lovers such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, melons and squash in early April inside a greenhouse, sunroom or on a sunny window sill. Start them in small containers but once they have a few of their true leaves, pot them up into a one-gallon size pot and continue growing them inside. This timing should be perfect for planting out in mid-May or whenever the nighttime temperatures hold steady at 10 degrees throughout the night.

I have been chopping up banana peels into one-inch segments and putting them into a plastic bag in the freezer. By the time the heat lovers are ready to go into the garden, I will have lots of chopped-up banana peels to put in the tomato's planting holes. This will give them a good source of potassium and calcium which will deter blossom end rot.

It's finally spring, and plants are raring to grow! For me this is a wonderful time of year as you can see the garden change almost daily. There is a lot of work to do in the garden, but it is also life-enhancing to stop and admire the loveliness around us. The world is filled with beauty; birds singing their hearts out, bees are buzzing, flowers are blooming and our food is growing right before our eyes. You can't have a better life than that!

'Til next month, happy gardening,

C. Money

