

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

Policy

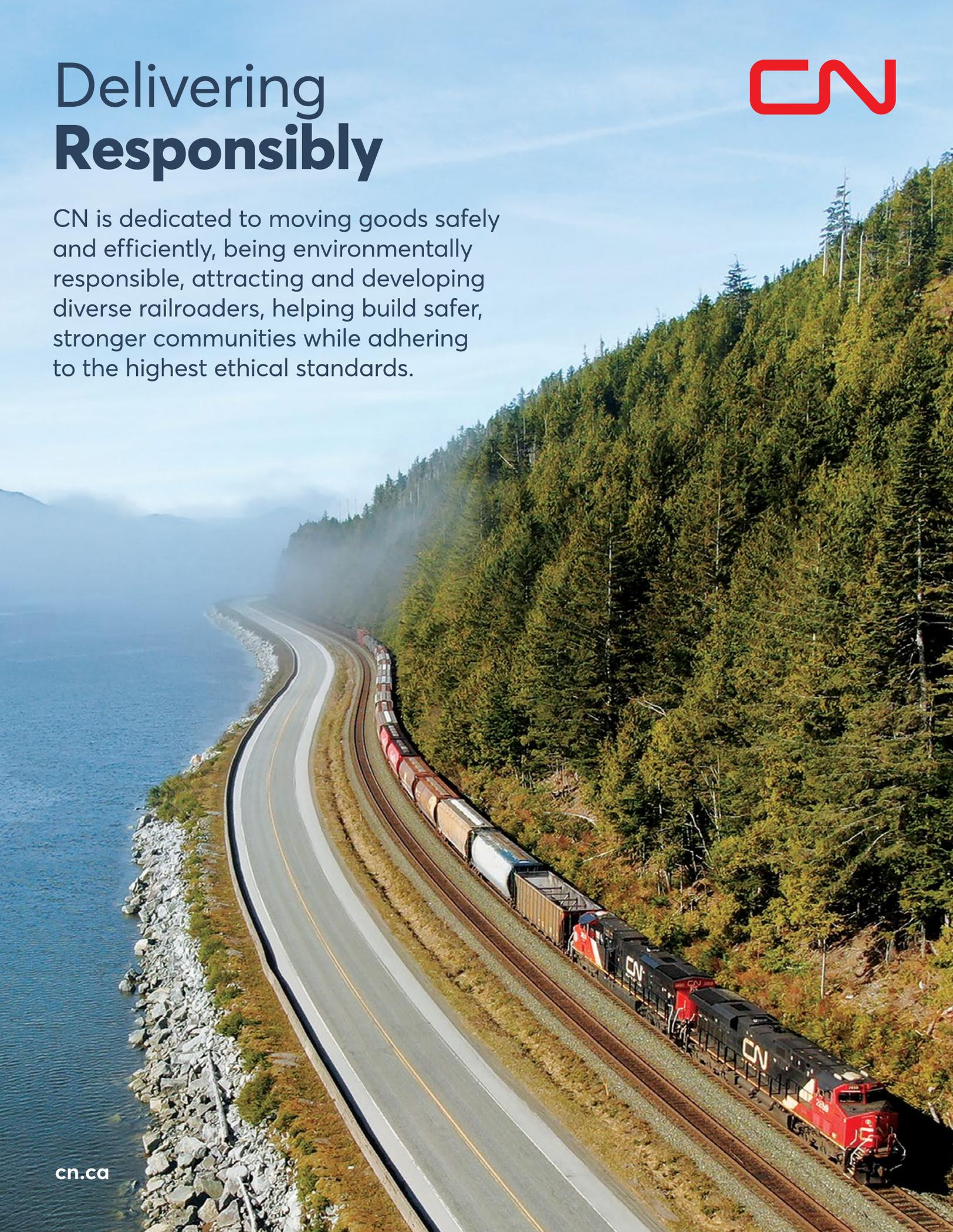


Postcards from the Pandemic

Delivering Responsibly



CN is dedicated to moving goods safely and efficiently, being environmentally responsible, attracting and developing diverse railroaders, helping build safer, stronger communities while adhering to the highest ethical standards.



Policy

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
L. Ian MacDonald

lianmacdonald@gmail.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Lisa Van Dusen
lvandusen@policymagazine.ca

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Thomas S. Axworthy,
Andrew Balfour, Yaroslav Baran,
James Baxter, Derek H. Burney,
Catherine Cano, Stéphanie Chouinard,
Margaret Clarke, Rachel Curran,
Paul Deegan, John Delacourt,
Susan Delacourt, Graham Fraser,
Dan Gagnier, Helaina Gaspard,
Martin Goldfarb, Sarah Goldfeder,
Patrick Gossage, Frank Graves,
Jeremy Kinsman, Shachi Kurl,
Philippe Lagassé, Brad Lavigne,
Jeremy Leonard, Kevin Lynch,
Leslie MacKinnon, Peter Mansbridge,
Carissima Mathen, Elizabeth May,
Velma McColl, David McLaughlin,
David Mitchell, Don Newman,
Geoff Norquay, Fen Osler-Hampson,
Kevin Page, Andre Pratte,
Colin Robertson, Robin V. Sears,
Vianne Timmons, Brian Topp,
Lori Turnbull, Jaime Watt,
Anthony Wilson-Smith

WEB DESIGN

Nicolas Landry
policy@nicolaslandry.ca

SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Grace MacDonald
gmacdonald@policymagazine.ca

GRAPHIC DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Monica Thomas
monica@foothillsgraphics.ca

Policy

Policy is published six times annually by LPAC Ltd. The contents are copyrighted, but may be reproduced with permission and attribution in print, and viewed free of charge at the *Policy* home page at policymagazine.ca.

Price: \$6.95 per issue
Annual Subscription: \$39.95

PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED BY
St. Joseph Communications,
1165 Kenaston Street,
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1A4

Available in Air Canada Maple Leaf Lounges across Canada, as well as VIA Rail Lounges in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto.

Now available on PressReader.



Special thanks to our sponsors
and advertisers who are solely responsible for
the content of their ads.

In This Issue

- 2 **From the Editor / L. Ian MacDonald**
Postcards from the Pandemic
- 3 **Policy Q&A**
AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde: 'Moving in the Right Direction'
- 8 **Bob Rae**
Adapting to the UN's Distanced Diplomacy, and
New York's New Normal
- 10 **Elizabeth May**
My Lockdown Adventures in Parliamentary Zoom and in Marriage
- 12 **Peter M. Boehm**
My Life in Lockdown: A Hybrid Senate, a Family Adapts and
Farewell to my Father
- 14 **Mohammad Hussain**
Lockdown Lessons from a Big Sister
- 16 **Robin V. Sears**
Comparative Coping—A Hong Kong Perspective
- 18 **John Delacourt**
The Reading Time
- 20 **Lisa Van Dusen**
A Key Pandemic Takeaway: The People Prevailed
- 24 **Kevin Page**
The Social Costs of Social Distancing
- 26 **Tony Geheran**
COVID and Connecting Indigenous Communities to
the Digital World
- 28 **James Scongack**
Helping Communities Respond, from 'Hockey Hubs' to PPE
- 30 **Meredith Wilson-Smith**
Being Young and Vulnerable in Lockdown
- 32 **Vianne Timmons**
Getting to Know Memorial University Inside a Bubble

Canada and the World

- 34 **Stéphanie Chouinard**
In Both Constitutional and Electoral Politics, Quebec Still Looms Large
- 36 **Elizabeth McIninch**
Indigenous Leadership and the Economy: Saskatchewan Success Stories
- 39 **Jeremy Kinsman**
We Have to Talk about ...Vladimir Vladimirovich
- 42 **Column / Don Newman**
The Oil Holdouts vs. Reality

Book Reviews

- 43 Review by **Anthony Wilson-Smith**
The Unexpected Louis St-Laurent: Politics and Policies for a Modern Canada
Patrice Dutil, Editor
- 44 Review by **Don Newman**
The Third Man: Churchill, Roosevelt, Mackenzie King and the Untold Friendship that Won WWII
Neville Thompson
- 45 Review by **Arlene Perly Rae**
The Triumph of Nancy Reagan
Karen Tumulty
- 46 Review by **Paul Deegan**
Lessons Learned on Bay Street
Donald K. Johnson

Connect with us:  @policy_mag

 facebook.com/policymagazine



From the Editor / L. Ian MacDonald

Postcards from the Pandemic

Welcome to our special summer issue, *Postcards from the Pandemic*, a collection of articles by leading Canadians on how lives, including their own, have changed in the last year and a half under COVID-19, the most serious global health and economic crisis of our time.

We don't know what the new normal is yet, except that it won't be the same as the old one. Among other things, we've learned that *choosing* to work from home is one thing, and *having* to work from home quite another. Zoom calls, which most of us had never heard of, are now part of the daily work routine.

A Zoom call in mid-June was the virtual venue for our Q&A with Perry Bellegarde, stepping down after seven years as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. "We're moving in the right direction," he says, though much remains to be done on reconciliation and renewal, of which he speaks with great eloquence.

Bob Rae, Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations begins our series of Postcards with an account of life in New York during the lockdown, and since it's been lifted in the Big Apple. Green MP Elizabeth May recounts how "Parliament has been very odd," with virtual heckling disrupting proceedings in a "nearly empty chamber." Sen. Peter Boehm gives an account of his life, in and out of the Senate, during the first year of the pandemic. Ottawa political staffer Mohammad Hussain, whose Twitter reports on his first Christmas with roommates went

globally viral, imparts lockdown lessons from his big sister.

From a family visit to Hong Kong, Robin Sears writes of the difference between lockdown adaptation in the resilient financial hub and Montreal and Toronto. From Ottawa, John Delacourt recalls Lyndon Johnson's lessons in the power of kinesics for deciphering Zoom calls.

Our own Lisa Van Dusen measures the pandemic in the larger context of global politics and writes the best thing to come out of it is the way in which human beings "have risen to the moment." Kevin Page's main takeaway is "the lesson of gratitude" for family and country.

And two important examples of leading Canadian companies stepping up. Tony Geheran of TELUS writes of partnering with the Bears paw First Nation to establish cellular and online service in their remote reserve in the Alberta foothills of the Rockies. And James Scongack of Bruce Power tells of a partnership with Ontario Health and a "hockey hub" model for vaccine inoculations.

Meredith Wilson-Smith writes of life in the lockdown for students and young adults as she turned 22. Memorial University President Vianne Timmons hasn't seen her mother or her new grandchild, and looks forward to both.

In *Canada and the World*, Contributing Writer Stéphanie Chouinard takes a timely look at the Trudeau government's long promised update of the Official Languages Act. As Chouinard notes, the bill intro-

duced on June 15 is very much about the electoral politics of the language issue in Quebec.

Elizabeth McIninch looks at Indigenous success stories in business, using Saskatchewan companies as a case study of winners. Jeremy Kinsman, a former Canadian ambassador to Moscow, looks at Russian President Vladimir Putin's meeting with US President Joe Biden in Geneva on June 16.

And columnist Don Newman has a look at the challenges to the Alberta economy amid falling demand for heavy energy products in an increasingly climate conscious world.

Finally, in *Summer Reading*, we offer a delightful mix of book reviews. Historica Canada President Anthony Wilson-Smith offers praise for *The Unexpected Louis St-Laurent*, edited by Patrice Dutil. Uncle Louis, as he was known, presided over the post-war boom years of 1948-57 "as a man with his eye on the future, but habits rooted in the past." And Don Newman looks at Neville Thompson's, *The Third Man*, on Mackenzie King at the Second World War leadership table with Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

From New York, Arlene Perly Rae shares her positive take on Karen Tumulty's "thoroughly researched, comprehensive biography" *The Triumph of Nancy Reagan*. And Paul Deegan looks at Donald K. Johnson's autobiography, *Lessons Learned on Bay Street*.

Happy reading, and have a great summer. **P**

Policy Q&A

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde: ‘Moving in the Right Direction’

As he prepared to step down as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Perry Bellegarde sat for a conversation with Policy Editor L. Ian MacDonald, ranging from the residential school crisis to the growth of Indigenous businesses, including innovation addressing climate change.

Policy: Chief Bellegarde thank you for joining us in doing this today.

Chief Perry Bellegarde: Happy to do it.

Policy: One of the things on the news agenda, of course, is the residential school crisis—not a new subject for you. And of course, it’s not just the Kamloops 215, but thousands of others, as you’ve pointed out. And, despite the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, nothing has been done to locate the other sites. I wonder in terms of oral history and what you learned about, heard about this growing up in Saskatchewan at your mother’s knee?

Perry Bellegarde: I would say there were two things in Canada that really hurt First Nations people in a very negative way, and we still feel the intergenerational trauma and effects of them. One was the residential school system itself. The last one closed in 1996. I called the residential school system a genocide of our people. It broke down identity, broke down self, it broke down family, broke down community, broke down nationhood, then inflicted abuse on these beautiful children. Sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse, starvation, malnutrition, diseases, lack of proper health care,

overcrowded conditions. So, it was a genocide at residential schools.

“ I called the residential school system a genocide of our people. It broke down identity, broke down self, it broke down family, broke down community, broke down nationhood then inflicted abuse on these beautiful children. ”

Everything good about being a First Nations person was no good. Your beautiful long hair was cut. Your names were gone. Your languages were outlawed. So, we still feel the intergenerational trauma because you’re not healthy when you come out—if you survived those institutions. You don’t know how to raise a healthy family, you don’t know how to love and care. So, we feel the intergenerational trauma even now. And that’s reflected in 40,000 children still in foster care, it’s reflected in disproportionate

numbers of our people in jails and the high numbers of five to seven times youth suicide.

Then the other one was the Indian Act, the colonization and oppression. We weren’t allowed to leave the reserve till 1951 without a permit from the Indian agent. We weren’t allowed to sell anything without a permit from the Indian agent to participate in the economy. We weren’t even allowed to vote until 1961. The Indian Act broke down our system of governance—Hereditary chiefs, clan mothers. It outlawed sundances and potlatches. Because of the residential schools and the Indian Act, it was colonization, oppression and it basically controlled First Nations people by keeping us on our little pieces of land called reserves, so that all the other lands and resources could be exploited to form Canada.

So, when you talk about the 215 children who were discovered or uncovered, it just validated all the stories we’ve been hearing from survivors for years and years and years. That there were a lot of deaths in these schools. And there’s a lot of unmarked graves in these institutions. And that’s what we’re seeing now.

We need to listen and learn from the past because our history is shared. But how do we learn from the past and chart a future forward together as people? We have a challenge now to really embrace reconciliation. And it’s hard work. To listen to the truth about how Canada was founded and provide some hope and light that we can create a better future together.

Policy: And the TRC, in its final report, the title says it all, doesn’t it? *Missing*



National Chief Perry Bellegarde chats with children during a February 2017 child welfare demonstration on Parliament Hill. AFN photo

Children and Unmarked Burials. Do we have any idea how many children are missing and what is being done to somehow identify these remains and return them to their families and their descendants?

Perry Bellegarde: Well, the TRC documented approximately 4,000 deaths. Children's deaths in these institutions, but we know that's low and that there are far more. Earth sonar technology will do the proper research investigation because you need to know where are these children from? Who are these children? What are their names? You have to look at DNA testing.

In some cases, these may be crime scenes—how old are these bodies, how did they die? All these questions have to be answered and then you've got to search and notify the next of kin, and the communities themselves. And then you have to bring in ceremony and all this has to be done through ceremony, and protocols and prayer. And so it's done in a respectful way so the Elders have to be brought in together, so there's a lot of work with this.

One TRC call to action is finding all these unmarked graves and then commemoration. All of the sites have to be done properly, so there's be-

ginning to be a lot of work. And I've said before that these 215 beautiful young spirits are waking up and they're speaking to people and people are starting to listen—which is a really good thing.

Policy: And what's your sense of why the government's still in court or hanging on to litigation?

Perry Bellegarde: That one is a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision, and when we clearly pointed out that there is discrimination and racism that these young people faced in that system and we won a \$40,000-a-case decision that these people should be compensated. I've said before there's no need for a judicial review. There shouldn't be a judicial review. You're fighting children, just go on and work towards the implementation of that decision. Because again, you're only a child once. You only have a childhood experience once, so we're still looking at it.

In addition to the AFN, in this Canadian HRT decision, we are in negotiations. I'm encouraging the federal government to just come up with a proper fair settlement, so these children don't have to go to court in any way shape or form, so that's still the position we're advocating.

Policy: In terms of the church and the Papal apology and the possibilities of that. One hears of First Nations being invited to Rome, perhaps to meet with senior members of the curia and even the Pope himself, possibly to do an apology in person. I expect that Cardinal Michael Czerny, who's a Canadian, is involved in that because he's close to the Pope. Do you have a sense of where that's going? What would you like to see happen?

Perry Bellegarde: We've been working with the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops for the last 2-3 years, building relationships because they're a very key piece on, first, getting an audience with Pope Francis, and second, getting him to come to Canada to make a statement to the survivors here. And we've been working with them the last number of years, and we were planning a trip to the Vatican a number of years ago, but then there was a federal election, so that slowed down things and then COVID-19 came upon us. So, things have been postponed again, on that call to action.

It's very important for reconciliation to have the highest office of the Roman Catholic Church come and speak to survivors here in Canada. And so, we're going to keep seeking that audi-

ence with His Holiness Pope Francis. To have an apology from the Pope is very important. What a strong statement that would make. He's made apologies in 2015 to the Indigenous people in Bolivia as well to the Irish people in 2010. We're still planning to go back to the Vatican to have an audience and the Pope will be guided by spirit and he will speak from his mind, but more importantly from his heart, when survivors get in front of him.

Policy: And Kamloops would be just the site for an apology, wouldn't it?

Perry Bellegarde: That's where it happened but we have 130 plus sites in Canada. My dad went to Lebrét Residential School in Lebrét, Saskatchewan. So, he went there but there were 19 or 20 in Saskatchewan. Across Canada there were 130 residential school sites.

Policy: How was he marked by that. Did he ever talk to you about it?

Perry Bellegarde: No, my dad passed when I was 16. But we could see the influence in the sense that he didn't want us to go to residential schools. He didn't say why. But obviously he knew the hurt, the pain he.... You know there's a lot of suffering, so why would you subject your children whom you love to something that's in a bad way? So, even if we wanted to go for sports or to meet other First Nations people, we didn't go. We were bussed into the provincial school system...It was a travesty and a very dark mark on Canada's history.

Policy: On something more uplifting, something that seems like a good note for you to end your leadership at the AFN on. Your thoughts on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) passed by Parliament at the end of the sitting.

Perry Bellegarde: I've been National Chief for seven years, and I've been in First Nations politics since 1986, 35 years. Leadership is all about bringing people together and building relationships. And once you start doing that and you seek out processes that unite rather than divide, you

“ We have a treaty relationship with the Crown. We don't have a treaty relationship with the Liberals. We don't have a treaty relationship with the Conservatives or the Greens or the NDP or the Bloc. We have a treaty relationship with the Crown. Nations make treaties, treaties do not make nations. ”

can move things and you can get policy and legislation done. Bill C-15, which is the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is one very good example.

Even 10 years ago, there was no public dialogue about racism or discrimination in Canada, no public dialogue or discourse about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or the impacts of residential schools. Ten years ago, there was no Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. So, we can see the ground we've gained by even having this public dialogue.

For example, the recent Throne Speech, we have never, ever had as much dedicated to First Nations issues. We had a whole chapter. A whole chapter was dedicated to First Nations issues! So it's not only C-15. It's C-91, the Indigenous Languages Act is complete. It's C-92, Child Welfare is completed and there's 40,000 children in foster care, which is why we keyed in on children and the key jewel in C-92 is that First Nations law is paramount. So, you can start focusing on prevention, not apprehension. And you may as well throw C-5 in there as well, the National Day of Reconciliation got passed. C-8, the Oath of Citizenship office which now recognizes treaty rights as well. Now C-15, implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That is the road map to reconciliation in Canada.

And it creates economic certainty, because it involves the rights and title holders sooner than later in any project. People will argue that free prime form consent creates economic uncertainty. I say no, no, no. It creates economic certainty. It is the pathway to

economic stability and economic investment. If you embrace the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Bill C-15, you get a national action plan that will be done in concert with Indigenous peoples. And, as well, you get a national policy and law review. So, all the laws that are inconsistent with the UN Declaration have to be brought into line.

Policy: In retrospect, do you think Mr. Harper deserves some credit for the apology he made originally in 2008, and the appointment of the TRC?

Perry Bellegarde: Well, again, there was a court challenge, there was some legal pressure. And all the powers that be at that time listened to them. So, whoever was in power, I won't say they didn't have a choice, but I will acknowledge leadership for embracing it and getting it done. Now we have to keep building on that. It was the Conservatives who were in power, granted, but there were also legal court cases that brought them to that place. And now, the Liberals are in power in a minority. So, you've got a task to implement all the calls to action.

Whoever comes to power has Crown fiduciary obligations, and even, for example, treaties. We have a treaty relationship with the Crown. We don't have a treaty relationship with the Liberals. We don't have a treaty relationship with the Conservatives or the Greens or the NDP or the Bloc. We have a treaty relationship with the Crown. Nations make treaties, treaties do not make nations.

Policy: Do you have a sense looking forward about the possible Charter implications of the United Nations



National Chief Perry Bellegarde listens intently as negotiators worked toward the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in November 2015. *AFN photo*

Declaration in terms of the Constitution and interpretation by the courts? Possible invocation of the notwithstanding clause and that sort of thing?

Perry Bellegarde: No, I think you have section 35, on the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, you have Canada's Constitution. Supreme law of the land. Legal scholars, both domestically and international scholars, have said this international UN document declaration can be implemented within Canada's domestic state. No problem, no question. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples does not give Indigenous peoples any new rights, it merely recognizes what we have already.

Policy: On First Nations and business success stories, that's been emerging increasingly during your leadership of the AFN. I go back to being in the same room as Chief Billy Diamond and Robert Bourassa in 1975 when they signed the James Bay Energy Agreement. And without the leadership and the vision of those two, the James Bay Energy project would never have been built. I wonder if today's business leaders are, in a sense Billy Diamonds; inheritors of something that's now larger than what we had. The pipeline partnership

that's emerging for the ownership of the Trans Mountain Pipeline between the First Nations communities along the route of the twin pipeline in partnership with Pembina, and then Project Reconciliation, another First Nations group which says it would hold 100 percent ownership. You have the Clearwater deal, the Membertou nation in Nova Scotia and the leadership of Chief Tearance Paul. These are big stories and I think people are really glad to see them. Your thoughts?

Perry Bellegarde: It's a good point. You know, economic self-sufficiency, economic development, growth. I've always said you can't talk about self-determination or self-government without economic self-sufficiency tied in. It provides hope when you see Membertou getting involved with Clearwater, a multibillion-dollar fishing industry. We're moving beyond impact benefit agreements, and we're starting to look at equity ownership. And we're starting to embrace that concept of the three Ps—Planet, People, Profit—and incorporating First Nations people to make sure that their sustainable economic development going forward.

Balancing the environment and economy at all fronts, we also have some First Nations that are involved in green energy. For example,

T'Sou-ke First Nation B.C., totally on solar, and they're selling power back to the B.C. grid at T'Sou-ke First Nation Gore Plains. I think of Henvey Inlet Chief McQuabbie they have a wind farm in northern Ontario.

I think of a Gull Bay First Nation, and they have microgrids. So up in Gull Bay they're saving 300,000 litres of diesel because of investments in the microgrid there. Also, moving into that whole clean, green energy-field geothermal at Peguis. Are you talking about the forestry sector, mining, tourism, energy, transportation, hospital, the retail sector? So, we've got to break it down because even though people will say we've got to create our own economy, I'm saying there is one economy.

There is a domestic economy in Canada, and then there's a global economy. So how do First Nations start participating in the global economy and as not only consumers of goods and services but producers of goods and services? It's all about demand and supply.

And so we're fitting into that supply chain now as First Nations people and having access to land and territory and resources, with our rights being recognized. We're getting involved in the forestry sector, the whole softwood lumber issue because First Nations are getting involved in that industry. What are some of the biggest barriers to First Nations participation in the economy? The biggest one was a lack of access to capital. So, the Infrastructure Bank has a big role to play. Then, capacity building, technical expertise, even infrastructure having access to high speed Internet.

The other aspect was where is the procurement policy? Federal government-wise and provincial government-wise, having a percentage of these government contracts dedicated to First Nations entrepreneurs and businesses. So, between procurement, between access to capital, between capacity and the bonding issue, all of these things were barriers to creating economic growth, sustainable growth

but as well, employment opportunities. And I think there is movement now that those challenges and hurdles are being overcome. And you're going to start seeing greater economic self-sufficiency amongst First Nations people and a greater participation in the economy and wealth creation and job creation. And that's a positive thing going forward and moving beyond this thing called the Indian Act. I see a lot of light happening now.

Policy: And going forward in terms of our largest trading partner, the United States, how do you see the trans-border issues in terms of sovereignty and so forth? Between First Nations and some of your Native American colleagues.

Perry Bellegarde: Well, number one—we always say it first—we didn't create the borders, right? The Canada-US border: we didn't create that border. We've always had trade between our nations and tribes and we still have that trade, I would say that people need to embrace the Jay Treaty, which is recognized by the USA but not yet by Canada, that will help promote trade between our nations and tribes. I think there was some movement made with CUSMA, the Canada-US-Mexico Agreement, in which we tried to get a whole Indigenous Peoples' chapter. We had gender. We had environment. And we were looking at a First Nations chapter. We didn't quite get that chapter in there, but there are some powerful words within that international trade agreement. If Canada wants to get involved in the world and start trading some of these natural resources, from a First Nations perspective, how are we involved as Indigenous peoples? We should be involved in shipping potash through the world. We should be involved in dealing with softwood lumber to our biggest trading partner. And the different energy sectors as well. There's a huge role for Indigenous peoples to play on a global stage, and that's starting to be recognized.

Policy: I wanted finally to ask about your in legacy terms and how you've run the AFN, led the AFN over the

years. I wonder, how does the Chief of the AFN keep more than 600 other chiefs happy and on board?

Perry Bellegarde: When I took office seven years ago, I was asked that question. We're so diverse, we have 60-plus different nations or languages across Canada. We have historic pre-Confederation treaties, Wampum treaties. You have the Treaty of Niagara in 1764. You have the Silver Covenant chain. You've got the Victorian Treaties in the 1800s. You have modern day treaties. You have territories with no treaties. So how do you bring about unity and working together as a collective? We have collective rights. And the most important thing is that our AFN has to be relevant to our people. It has to be responsive to the issues, concerns and needs identified by the people, and it has to be respectful of that diversity. One of the biggest things we've done is put ceremony first. Always go back to our ceremonies and traditions and customs and practices. And once you do that and you use the drum for example, all of our First Nations tribes do. There's one thing that's consistent. There's a drum. In all of our nations and tribes from East Coast to West Coast and North, South, not everybody embraces the relevancy of eagle feathers, the sacredness of the eagle. Not all of our tribes go to sundances, not all of our tribes go to sweat lodge. Not all of our tribes go to potlatch, tea dance. There's diversity.

You have to respect that diversity, But if you use our ceremony, that's creator's law. That's natural law. And it's important to put that at the forefront. Our worldview is quite simple. We're two legged. We're the two-legged. So, when we go to ceremony, we acknowledge the creator. We acknowledge the one that sits in the east, the one that sits in the west, in the south, in the north. We acknowledge our Mother, Mother Earth, and Father Sky, Grandmother Moon, Grandfather Sun. We acknowledge the four-legged relatives we have. We acknowledge the ones that fly, the ones that crawl, the ones that swim. The male plants, female plants. And then we acknowl-

edge those four grandmother spirits that look after the waters, rainwater, freshwater, saltwater, and the power of women when life comes, water breaks. So, we're the two-leggeds. I don't care if you're black, yellow, red, or white. We're the two-legged tribe and we fit into that family.

We're all related. We're all connected.

Policy: And as you leave in terms of gender equity, is there still some work to be done for in the role of leadership? Role of women chiefs at the table inside the AFN? Are you satisfied with the progress that's being made?

Perry Bellegarde: Women are very powerful and women bring strong leadership at all levels to the table and we embrace that. Even in our ceremonies, half the lodge is male, half the lodge is female. And you have to respect that going forward, there's always balance and you always work towards that balance in that respect. And you get better decisions.

Policy: How would you like Perry Bellegarde's leadership to be remembered? In a sentence.

Perry Bellegarde: Bellegarde's leadership was grounded in our seven teachings—of truth and honesty, love, respect, courage, wisdom, humility. That's what I'd hope people would say.

Anyway, I campaigned on closing the gap. I've used that phrase over and over. According to the United Nations Human Development Index, Canada is rated 6th but if you apply the same indices to First Nations people were 63rd. And that's why over the last seven fiscal years, I advocated for monies in housing and water and infrastructure and healthcare and education. Investments to close that gap over seven fiscal years. We have close to \$43 or \$44 billion over seven fiscal years. Again, unprecedented investments to help close the gap. It is very important to recognise that progress doesn't mean parity.

We still have a ways to go, but we're moving in the right direction. **P**

From a conversation over Zoom on June 14, 2021

Adapting to the UN's Distanced Diplomacy, and New York's New Normal

Bob Rae

I had three jobs when COVID came to Canada: teaching at the Munk School at University of Toronto, serving as counsel to the law firm Olthius Kler Townshend, and advising the government of Canada as Special Envoy on Humanitarian and Refugee issues. This last job was supposed to involve some travel to Africa and Asia, but as February turned to March, it became clear that was not going to happen. Like most people, I had initially underestimated the seriousness of the outbreak, and then it finally hit me, as it did everyone else: Stay home, keep your distance, wear a mask, stay home, keep your distance, wear a mask. And so we did, both confined and liberated by Zoom and other platforms, explaining to grandchildren why we could only talk on the screen and the phone.

Prime Minister Trudeau had asked me at the end of January if going to New York as Permanent Representative to the United Nations was something I could consider. Of course, I accepted, knowing that the appointment would not happen until later in the year. As COVID locked us in, and my work on refugees and humanitarian issues was conducted remotely and virtually, (a strange feeling for an issue that involves such immediacy), the global nature of the lockdown became clearer, and so did the truly global dimensions of the crisis.

Living in a bubble was actually an accurate reflection of the challenge in that first spring. I can remember the



Bob Rae, Canada's Permanent Representative at the UN General Assembly, in the COVID context of distanced diplomacy. *Canadian delegation photo*

joy of the first backyard visit, the first trip to the door of the restaurant to pick up food, and seeing neighbours in the street as Arlene and I went on our masked walks around the block and back home. But as I was experiencing this odd reality—my Zoom

life was taking me to refugee camps, to discussions with diplomats, professors, refugees, emergency workers, and in the toughest of settings—I could not help but feel that even as cases mounted in Canada in what we now call “the first wave”, people in



Bob and Arlene Perly Rae enjoy an unmasked moment in New York's Central Park. With the resumption of normal life in New York, he writes they're getting to do normal things.
Rae family photo

most parts of the world were much worse off.

“ It took a while for it to sink in that everyone was working from home, that the empty streets and offices in Toronto had their match in every part of the world as everyone was coping with the same isolation. ”

My calls to New York became more frequent that spring, and with the city as the epicentre of the pandemic, I could feel the anxiety talking to UN and Canadian staff working from home with kids in the background. When I talked with civil servants and politicians in Ottawa, the picture in my head was that I was isolated but they were sitting in an office somewhere. It took a while for it to sink in that everyone was working from home, that the empty streets and of-

fices in Toronto had their match in every part of the world as everyone was coping with the same isolation, the same anxiety, the same realities of closed schools and longer dreams and naps.

In July, I worked from the cottage, heading into Ottawa on a more regular basis as the announcement of my appointment meant I had to get ready to head to New York before the UN sessions would start in earnest in September. Expanding bubbles meant children and grandchildren could gather together, and after a multitude of briefings—and yes, more Zoom calls—we packed up the car and drove across the Thousand Islands Bridge armed with diplomatic passports and travel documents allowing us to get to New York.

We arrived in the evening, warmly greeted by masked staff from the Canadian Mission, and had a meal at a nearby restaurant where a covered sidewalk patio had been built (it's still there, along with thousands of others), and we slowly made our discovery of New York. It was clear, talking with my colleagues at the

Mission, that the spring had been truly traumatic, the night air filled with ambulance sirens as the hospital admissions kept mounting relentlessly (New York lost at least 25,000 people in those early months of the pandemic). Everyone worked from home, and the UN was determined to keep going, and keep meeting, virtually but constantly. I was thrown in at the deep end as Canada was chairing the Peacebuilding Commission and co-chairing, with Jamaica and the UN Secretary General, an ad hoc group of countries assessing the impact of COVID on the global economy.

Both jobs had been started by my predecessor, Marc-André Blanchard, and were to prove both daunting and rewarding in my first year. Some of the fruits of our labours have been well-reflected in decisions by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the G7, as well as a number of national governments, including Canada.

At a personal level, social life being much quieter than it might otherwise be in New York was actually an advantage. We went to Central Park, to see the Statue of Liberty, to be tourists without being jostled and crammed, and to slowly get to know Canadians here as well as the representatives of 193 countries where face to face meetings were infrequent. Meetings at the UN itself have been largely limited to one per country, distanced, masked, and washing hands.

We are not through this yet. Its health impacts are being felt everywhere, as are the economic consequences. Walking up Madison Avenue twenty blocks and back Arlene and I counted 47 empty storefronts, businesses closed, and the same is true all over the city. It is not a “ghost town”, but it feels the impact still, and this will continue. There will never be “business as usual”, it will be business with a new usual. **P**

Bob Rae is Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

My Lockdown Adventures in Parliamentary Zoom and in Marriage

Elizabeth May

Of all the disasters and traumas human society has lived through, the COVID-19 pandemic has the remarkable attribute of being a shared experience that was completely isolating. Each of our experiences are similar and yet unique.

I found myself the other day speaking with a constituent who was telling me how he had not seen his children for months, how he and his wife had to be locked down. He seemed surprised when I said, “Yes, me too. I have not seen my daughter for months and months and we are locked down.” Those of us with grown-up kids hardly see them if we were not blessed to have them in our bubble before this started.

But those with little kids are having the opposite experience. When we catch up with each other and share how COVID has been impacting our lives, it has struck me how frequently I hear, especially from fathers, how much they have loved working from home. The experience of being around their kids has been fantastic. More than one member of Parliament has remarked that they do not want to go back to their “normal” life with its outrageously intense focus on work and family life squeezed into insufficient hours on the margins. Through Zoom, we have seen kids popping in and out of the screen. The other day, my friend and now former Green MP colleague from Fredericton, Jenica Atwin was juggling doing Zoom

from her office with both little boys with her. She was sure she had them organized with games and activities and snacks as she spoke in a later night session. As she was wrapping up her speech, her littlest one tried to climb up on her lap and Parliament melted in sweet smiles. Deputy speaker Alexandra Mendez said: “adorable.”

Nathaniel Erskine Smith was seen in a Zoom vote reading his little one a bedtime story. And many a child has made a cameo appearance thinking they were off-screen, not to mention dogs and cats!

Parliament has been very odd. We work hard, debate, pass legislation and get interrupted by heckling. Some of us experience this in the nearly empty chamber. Most of us experience this on Zoom. Initially, I thought we would not have heckling on Zoom. I had made the false assumption that the Speaker could mute anyone he had not given the floor. And initially, Parliament was more respectful. Perhaps other MPs had made the same assumption about being on mute. However, it was not long before the bad boys discovered that Zoom gave them powers of the uber-heckler. Interrupting with a heckle while on Zoom actually catapults the heckler onto the main stage and shuts down the audio feed to whomever is speaking. When a lot of voices engage in interruptions, total chaos reigns. Pity the poor Speaker.

My favourite moments are when we are gathered, but the House isn’t in session yet. Sometimes, we’re

waiting for the Speaker to read the prayer and get the House open. Other times, we’re hearing the bells in the wait for votes. Every now and then, we start chatting. Just to see the face of a friend, even when several hundred little black squares let us know our chat is entirely public, is a treasured chance to re-connect. We share photos of new grandbabies (shout out to Marilyn Gladu and Todd Dougherty).

“Parliament has been very odd. We work hard, debate, pass legislation and get interrupted by heckling. Some of us experience this in the nearly empty chamber. Most of us experience this on Zoom.”

Every now and then someone entertains us. Charlie Angus has been known to get going on his guitar as we all sing along. Charlie is a real musician—front man for the Grievous Angels—and when we all sing along, it’s hardly melodious, but it is fun. The other night when we had a vote around midnight on the dreadful back-to-work legislation for Montreal longshoremen, we had a real treat. Tim Louis, new Liberal MP from Kitchener, is a professional musician with a wonderful voice. He had his keyboard ready and sang to



Working from home: Green MP Elizabeth May says the virtual sittings of Parliament by Zoom are a “shared but isolating experience.”
Photo courtesy Elizabeth May

us a whole set of gorgeous jazz. We had assumed that with the chamber empty and the bells ringing for a vote, no one would know what we were up to. It turns out they had heard. Deputy Speaker Bruce Stanton, calling us to order for the vote, said with warmth and humour, “And now we leave the musical stylings of the honourable member for Kitchener-Conestoga...”

What will be the lasting impacts of COVID? I suspect they will be many. It may be years before we think it’s a good idea to gather in large, squashed crowds. I think it will not be unusual to see people wearing masks, even just to ward off colds and flu.

For me, being locked down—and locked up—in my rented apartment that I loved so much and thought I would never leave, was not quite as lovely when my only outdoors

“ Every now and then someone entertains us. Charlie Angus has been known to get going on his guitar as we all sing along. Charlie is a real musician—front man for the Grievous Angels—and when we all sing along, it’s hardly melodious, but it is fun. ”

was the balcony. And my newly married-up husband, John, who was used to living and working outdoors on his Ashcroft, B.C. farm, was not having fun. So, one COVID impact has been our new adventure: with another couple, my hus-

band and I have bought a place and moved to Saturna Island. I am now on just over half an acre of lush garden, a short walk from a beautiful little cove.

Fingers crossed I get a second vaccination shot soon. Fingers crossed I will get to see my children over this summer. Fingers crossed those best moments of our Parliamentary lockdown are the ones I will remember. **P**

Elizabeth May, MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands, is the former leader of the Green Party of Canada.

My Life in Lockdown

A HYBRID SENATE, A FAMILY ADAPTS AND FAREWELL TO MY FATHER

Peter M. Boehm

For many, the past year-and-a-half has been characterized by a certain routine: watching your health; observing the ever-evolving rules for social distancing and lockdowns but still staying in touch with your loved ones; working from home (assuming you were fortunate enough to do so); and adapting to virtual meetings, virtual happy hours, and all the new accompanying lingo. For me, this time has had its emotional highs and lows.

Awareness of what might lie ahead began to sink in during February and March of last year. My previous jobs had included health issues in both the international development context and the G7, where readiness and coordination of response in the wake of H1N1 and Ebola outbreaks over the years had been a consistent item of global policy focus. As COVID-19 began its spread beyond China early in 2020, it was clear this new virus had the potential to become something much bigger.

Our work in the Senate continued as normal until mid-March when Parliament, and just about everything else, shut down. Our last order of legislative business before the pandemic changed—maybe forever—how Parliament functions, was CUSMA. As the Senate sponsor of the bill to implement what was called the New NAFTA, I had a full-length speech of roughly 45 minutes ready for second reading on March 13. The night before, however, it was decided by leaders in the Senate and the House of Commons that we would sit the next day to ensure the passage of this important business and then adjourn.



Sen. Peter Boehm and his wife “spent a lovely week on the beach” in Cuba at the very start of the pandemic, but had to cancel the working part of his trip to Havana and returned home to quarantine. *Family photo*

So, my speech became a very short intervention and the bill passed. CUSMA entered into force on July 1, 2020. Also, on March 13, the prime minister advised Canadians to postpone or cancel all non-essential travel outside the country.

After careful consideration, we left for Cuba early the next morning on a long-planned visit. My spouse and I were conflicted: we had been looking forward to this trip for some time and to celebrating our daughter’s 16th birthday. On the one hand, two days earlier, on March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared COVID-19 a pandemic and the official advice presaged

stricter measures to come. On the other, Cuba was our first posting in Canada’s Foreign Service, we spoke the language, I knew many in Cuban officialdom and we had stayed at this resort in Varadero before. We spent a lovely week on the beach but did not leave the resort and I cancelled a planned visit to Havana to meet with Cuba’s deputy foreign minister. I was also working with travel agents to have our son, who was working on agricultural development in Ethiopia, return to Ottawa. It was safer for him to be home with us and it meant we could all enjoy 14 days of mandatory quarantine together. As the week in Varadero passed and incoming flights were halted, the number of Canadians in our resort dwindled.

Cuba began to impose mobility and social distancing restrictions once it was found that a few European tourists had carried the virus onto the island. The scene at Varadero’s airport was dystopian: Cuban officials were masked—this was not yet normal—and many frightened-looking Canadians, some stranded, were moved onto our plane. Arrival in Ottawa was tense: CBSA officers in masks and face shields, our taxi fitted with a plastic partition—again, while we are used to this now, we certainly were not at the time. We arrived home and the next morning our good friends brought us groceries. United with one of our three sons, we isolated for two weeks. Ottawa felt bleak but at least we were safe at home.

The immediate issue post-Cuba was adaptation. For my spouse, daughter, son, and I, the challenge was

how to work from home without falling over each other. I very quickly concluded that I would fare better from my Senate office downtown, where my virtual meetings would not be interrupted by a barking Xena, our standard schnauzer. In the absence of Senate sittings and committee meetings, my colleague Mobina Jaffer and I established a discussion group for interested senators on the international dimensions of the pandemic, interacting with ministers, high-level global officials, and others, on COVID-related issues ranging from foreign to economic policy.

The Senate slowly but surely adopted a hybrid format where I, as an Ottawa-based senator, was, and have been, one of the few to attend in person, all the while observing prescribed distancing, masking, and other measures. Since I also sit on the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, I was involved in many virtual meetings that addressed legislation related to the billions of dollars of relief programming the government was rolling out.

In November, I was honoured to be elected Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade but our work thus far has been consigned to two government bills: the first, S-2, to amend the *Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act* and the second, C-30, this year's budget implementation act. Committees have only now, the first week of June 2021, been authorized to meet on non-government business. The halt on non-urgent meetings was done to ensure staff required onsite—of which there are many, from committee/procedural staff to interpreters to cleaners—were not exposed to undue health risks. I continue to hope that our committee will be able to examine the multilateral aspects of how to put the damage of the pandemic behind us, as well as its economic, social and developmental consequences.

The impact of the pandemic on men-



Sen. Boehm wearing a mask and shield for a visit to his 93-year-old father, who sadly died shortly thereafter. *Family photo*

tal health must also be seriously considered. I am a member of the Senate Mental Health Advisory Committee, which has tried to ensure senators and staff are well supported. On a personal level, I was and remain worried about our autistic son who lives in a group home in Sharbot Lake, Ontario. We have not been able to see him much, but he did get his first vaccination early and is lined up for the second.

My nonagenarian parents in Kitchener were scheduled to move into an assisted living facility but delayed their transfer because of the dire situation in long-term care (LTC) facilities exacerbated by the pandemic. They did make the move, but the transition was difficult. My dear father passed away on June 4th at 93. Like so many families, pandemic restrictions prevented us from honouring him with a proper funeral and celebration of his remarkable life so I will do so, briefly, here. His name was Michael Boehm and his family, belonging to the Saxon minority in Transylvania,

lost everything in 1944. In 1949, at the age of 21, he arrived in Canada. He learned his trade as a bricklayer and mason, sponsoring his siblings to join him. He started a construction business, married my mother, Anna Markus, had three children and an amazing life. I've thought of his remarkable journey at every key moment of my own life, including on my swearing-in as a senator.

“One thing we've learned during this period, it's that there is a crisis in Canada when it comes to caring for the aged. I spoke to this in the Senate in support of an inquiry launched by my colleague, Judith Seidman.”

One thing we've learned during this period is that there is a crisis in Canada when it comes to caring for the aged. I spoke to this in the Senate in support of an inquiry launched by my colleague, Judith Seidman.

Like so many people, we've been sustained during this crisis by simple things—reading good books (I am a happy member of a book group that has switched to meeting virtually) and watching excellent movies and TV from around the world. My favourite programs have been *Babylon Berlin* (no surprise, as a former ambassador to Germany), *Money Heist*, and *Vikings*. As I think about the way ahead, I feel compelled to quote Floki from *Vikings*, who, when faced with a dilemma, simply shrugs and states “it is in the hands of the gods.” This, of course, leads to the hairstyle of the gods: the mullet. I have one again. **P**

Senator Peter M Boehm, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, is a former ambassador and deputy minister.

Lockdown Lessons from a Big Sister

Mohammad Hussain

Mirrors can really suck. You'll just be cleaning your room, listening to a podcast, trying to forget the global pandemic that haunts your every waking moment and then BAM—you catch a glimpse of yourself.

Gone is the young, carefree guy and in his place is someone who just looks tired.

In the span of a few short weeks in 2020, we had to give up seeing our colleagues, friends, and family. We lost many of our distractions. What we were left with was a lot of uncertainty and the crushing weight of our thoughts and anxieties.

Personally, this past year has been tough. Early in the pandemic, my dad passed away and it was challenging to grieve at a time when I couldn't hug my friends and family. Not long after, I started a master's degree. Not long after that, I took on a new job. Everything around me was changing and I couldn't find a moment to catch my breath.

My accidental confrontation with my mirror was a wakeup call: I needed to be taking better care of myself.

Often, in our difficult moments we turn to our role models for inspiration. Beyonce's *Homecoming* always reminds me that success comes with hard work. A phone call with an old colleague of mine always helps when I have a case of imposter syndrome.

In this case, I knew the wisdom I sought was with my older sister, Madeha. I have always been in awe of her parenting skills. Even on the days her toddler clings to her leg as she chases after her kindergartner who is trying to get away with eating



Mohammad Hussain (right) and his big sister, Madeha, whose parenting skills inspired his lockdown lessons. *Family photo*

paint, she manages to find time to do everything.

From her I took the following three lessons:

Keep Yourself Busy: My sister encourages her daughter to explore her interests, a task my niece takes very

seriously. Last time we spoke, she was an aspiring rock collector.

When people ask me what my hobbies are, I say I like to read and that I enjoy nature. This is a lie.

My actual favourite hobby has always been my work. As someone

who has followed politics from a young age, living and working in Ottawa has been a dream come true.

Before, when I would walk by the Parliament Buildings on my way to the office, even on the most challenging days, it inspired me to stay positive.

“ When we started having to work from home, the only things I walked by were the dirty dishes and laundry I was trying to ignore. It quickly became very clear that I would need to find some real interests. ”

When we started having to work from home, the only things I walked by were the dirty dishes and laundry I was trying to ignore. It quickly became very clear that I would need to find some real interests.

I started with origami. My goal was to learn to fold different animals and use that time to focus on my wellness. Although this failed miserably, I learned that finding hobbies you like takes time. My attempts to learn to ice skate were also unsuccessful but eventually I made my way to video games.

Sometimes, at the end of a long day when you feel tired, there's nothing as fulfilling as catching a Pokémon.

Get Yourself Outside: My nephew has this one specific bad mood. My sister perceives it as him having pent up energy. I perceive it as him summoning a demon. Call it what you want, her solution to this is to get him to a park as quickly as possible.

Everyone has a “tell.” Some people pace around the house looking for something to be angry about. Other people rearrange their furniture. My “tell” is that I get into imaginary



“Now, when I catch myself mumbling angrily, I put on my helmet, hop on my bike, and go on an adventure,” writes parliamentary aide Mohammad Hussain. *Mohammad Hussain photo*

“ I prefer the comfort of being indoors to going outside. There is nothing better than a comfy couch and some strong air conditioning. But when indoors is the only place you are allowed to be, home can start to feel suffocating. ”

arguments with people who don't know I am angry at them. It all generally means the same thing: it's time to get outside the house.

Like many people, I prefer the comfort of being indoors to going out-

side. There is nothing better than a comfy couch and some strong air conditioning. But when indoors is the only place you are allowed to be, home can start to feel suffocating.

So, now, when I catch myself mumbling angrily, I put on my helmet, hop on my bike, and go on an adventure.

Don't Eat Paint: A toddler with a bottle of paint is not a good thing. Inevitably, they will eat the paint—it's in their nature. They don't understand that paint is not good for them. That's when a grown-up steps in and saves the day.

I have a theory. Even as we become adults, the instinct to eat paint stays with us. It evolves and changes, but it's always there, lurking in the shadows. When left alone for long enough with my thoughts, I undoubtedly start spiraling as I question all my life choices. This is my version of eating paint.

There is no handbook on this stuff and being stuck at home with few distractions only amplifies every negative feeling. This is the point at which I have to step in and stop myself from catastrophizing. This often just looks like me reminding myself that I am trying to do my best during a very hard time.

This pandemic will end at some point. As we get closer and closer to the other side, I am realizing that my stress and worries will not magically disappear with it. Those are not things I can control.

What I can control is how I deal with these stresses. I can also control whether I am being kind to people and taking care of myself.

There is one thing I know for sure. No matter how old I get, when I look in the mirror, I'll still want to see a young carefree guy staring back. **P**

Mohammad Hussain is a political staffer who is the author of no books but many Tweets, most notably, a fun little thread about his first Christmas.

Comparative Coping— A Hong Kong Perspective

Among the many talents that Robin Sears brings to his role as a regular Policy contributor after decades advising politicians from Willy Brandt to Ed Broadbent to Brian Mulroney is a serious expertise in crisis communications. After spending part of the pandemic lockdown in his former home of Hong Kong, Robin provides a look at what worked and what didn't.

Robin V. Sears

The woman in Hong Kong was less than five feet tall, dressed in the dark formal Anglophile style of women of her generation, rushing toward me in the stream of early morning passengers, navigating the vast underground network of transit corridors. Absorbed in my cellphone, it was only when she was firmly parked in front of me looking up, that I stopped in surprise. “Sir, you may not have noticed that your mask has slipped from your nose...” It was gently and graciously delivered. Stunned, I snatched at my wayward mask and sputtered an apology. “Have a good day, sir” and then she was lost in the crowds.

Later, I smiled at what the encounter revealed about the difference between Canada and Hong Kong's struggle with social rituals in a pandemic. She was doing me a favour, saving me from the much less forgiving public safety officials parked at every corner. She saw it as a duty and had no fear of my reaction. Not the experience one would have, even now, on either the Toronto subway or the Montreal Métro.

It was iconic of the behavioural gap between communities that have

known public health crises at least every decade and Canada's indulgent complacency. Taking care of yourself, your family and your community in places where life is less predictable are not government responsibilities—they're yours.

When our apartment building in Hong Kong was suddenly locked down one night—one of our fellow tenants had tested positive for COVID-19—and surrounded by police and public health officials, we all trooped off to emergency testing, and returned to quarantine until our results returned. We shared wry stories and smiles in the elevators later. I heard not one complaint.

No one trusts the Beijing-backed government of Hong Kong to deliver clean air or affordable housing, let alone freedom of expression anymore. The leadership have indulged in disgraceful conduct almost weekly. At the front line in a testing or vaccine centre, however, every public employee is firm, polite and determinedly professional. Even the police, shuffling in the background, take their orders from these impressive young men and women struggling daily at the frontline of the pandemic battle. The regime they deliver is tough: three

weeks in a hotel room on arrival, regular compulsory testing, invasive contact tracing on every cellphone, and Plexiglas dividers between desks and tables in offices and restaurants.

The outcome: Hong Kong, a city of 7.5 million, perched on the lip of mainland China, with among the world's largest cargo airports, container terminals and flows of marine traffic; a city whose geography should have made it one of the most porous and endangered in the world, has had fewer than 220 COVID deaths in nearly 16 months. That is less than some big-city neighbourhoods in Canada. Greater Montreal and Toronto, together roughly the same size as Hong Kong, have suffered more than 20 times the number of fatalities.

“If you lived in either of Canada's two largest cities, you had a 20-times-greater risk of dying of COVID than in Asia's most international city.”

In other words, if you lived in either of Canada's two largest cities, you had a 20-times-greater risk of dying of COVID than in Asia's most international city.

There are many lessons in these dramatically different experiences and outcomes before the next one comes, above all a community engaged in and educated about the requirements of public health is the foundation for containment. Not support-



Hong Kong, with a population equivalent to Toronto and Montreal combined, has suffered 20-times fewer deaths in the pandemic. *iStock photo*

ive legislation, more money or better trained and equipped public health officials, though all those things are essentials, too. But if your citizens don't get it—that there are not opinions about masks, tests, and isolation, there are only facts—nothing will stop a pandemic.

Publicly available granular data, shared across every government, business and sector of the nation, is the second foundation. We need to assemble data according to the same rules, bullet-proof it with independent eyes and update it online several times a day—and hoarding, or 'editing' are not on. Hong Kong's contact tracing and local lockdowns are based on tens of thousands of data points collected 24/7. Our data sets were often laughably imprecise and contradictory.

Also, everyone in a role that requires them to communicate to the public needs to be able to do that clearly, transparently, persuasively and authentically. That means coaching, rehearsal and assessment, before the demands of real-time crisis commu-

nications kick in. Some Canadian officials could not communicate the time of day believably. Those that can't rise to the level of Bonnie Henry or Dr. Anthony Fauci should not be in front of any microphone or camera. Their collectively shambolic performance increased risks, anxiety and maybe even caseloads.

Hong Kong officials were not great communicators either, so the community had to develop its own sources, networks and telephone trees. It was not ideal, but Canada's communications disasters were worse. As one minister shared with me, they awoke one morning to see full-page print ads from two different government agencies offering completely contradictory advice and caution to readers. Unacceptable.

Finally, you have scientific, medical and academic advisers for a reason; to get the best advice from as many sources as possible. Those advisers have an obligation to reach consensus before they weight in and during this crisis, they often didn't. But the politicians have a higher obligation. Yes,

they are necessarily the "deciders", and yes, they have to weigh wider factors than public health alone. But if they receive a consensus recommendation from their tables of advisers and reject it, they must explain themselves rather than abuse those professionals by claiming to follow their advice when they are not. In Hong Kong, the entire health sector demanded early on that the government close all land crossings. The local government, always shaking in dread at Beijing's reaction, refused, claiming its advisers did not think it necessary. Thousands of health care professionals went on a one-day strike. The government, deeply humiliated, immediately closed the borders.

We have much to be proud of in our weathering these brutal months. We also need to find new ways of making the next pandemic less brutal. **P**

Veteran political strategist and Policy Contributing Writer Robin V. Sears lived and worked in Tokyo as Ontario's Agent General for Asia for six years, and later worked in the private sector in Hong Kong for a further six years.



Just another day at the office. John Delacourt writes that “meeting on screens all day creates siloed perspectives like never before.” *iStock photo*

The Reading Time

John Delacourt

I will call the pandemic, once it’s finally in the rearview mirror, “The Reading Time.” And I’m not simply referring to the books on the shelf that I have read or re-read (and that end up in background on every Zoom or Teams call I’m on). I’m thinking of the reading that we have trained ourselves to do in public affairs and government relations, as we have relied on communicating by hostage video.

Here’s what I mean. In *Master of the Senate*, the third—and, to my mind, the best (so far)—of the first four volumes of Robert Caro’s five-volume biography of Lyndon B. Johnson, there is a chapter that provides a window into the inner workings of

Johnson’s mind. Caro relates how this consummate political animal would train his staff to “read” for the information a simple, transactional conversation would provide—if you knew what to look for.

“Watch their hands, watch their eyes,” Johnson instructed them. “Read eyes. No matter what a man is saying to you, it’s not as important as what you can read in his eyes.” He told them to read between the lines for men’s weaknesses, because it was weakness that could be exploited. “The most important thing a man has to tell you is what he is not telling you,” he said. “The most important thing a man has to tell you is what he’s trying not to say.”

The LBJ portrayed by Caro is at once a cautionary character, a Trumpian

prototype who seems all id and appetite for power and influence, yet he is also a fascinating contradiction, gifted with a perceptiveness and sensitivity that garden variety narcissists do not have. As Caro writes: “Lyndon Johnson himself read with a genius that couldn’t be taught, with a gift that was so instinctive that a close observer of his reading habits, Robert G. (Bobby) Baker, calls it a ‘sense’; ‘He seemed to sense each man’s individual price and the commodity he preferred as coin.’ He read with a novelist’s sensitivity, with an insight that was unerring, with an ability, shocking in the depths of its penetration and perception, to look into a man’s heart and know his innermost worries and desires.”

Many of us who live by our virtual meetings may not have become so bloodless and Machiavellian as a Lyndon Johnson. Yet, we are now screen readers like never before, as “intel”—that dreaded word for the commodified mix of policy, gossip and punditry we trade on—has necessitated reading between the lines, for lack of access to the softer skills a conversation over coffee, or any actual person to person meeting, allows.

“Communicating through a crisis also polarizes positions; any and every government is playing defence while those trading in information and providing counsel are on offence.”

Communicating through a crisis also polarizes positions; any and every government is playing defence while those trading in information and providing counsel are on offence. It is a curious situation, because a great deal of what is discussed is not policy but process—not the “what” but the “how”. Whether it has been the script of logistics management for vaccines, sundry consultations or timelines for legislation, the same dynamic has played out time and again. The ones on offence like me are looking for certainties, fixed dates, granular details. Those on defence, usually bereft of such content, are rightfully cautious about pinning Jell-O to a wall. So, our screen reading skills have sharpened, focusing on the between-the-lines, what poker players call the “tell” from the others around the table, and it all feels a little intrusive, too bluntly expressed and needlessly binary, like most things digital usually do.

Or maybe I’m just doing Twitter wrong.

Over the first few months of this never-ending, many predicted that we were witnessing a transformation in how we work, communicate and transact with one another (or in this line of work, often all three at once) that the pandemic had only accelerated. Here in Ottawa, Shopify’s Tobi Lutke was one of the first ones out of the gate more than a year ago to announce this transformation was irrevocable, announcing the company would keep its offices closed until this year and, going forward, would allow most of its employees to work from home. In December 2020, Jamie Iannone, the CEO of Ebay, stated in a BBC interview that four years of projected change and growth for the platform had occurred over four quarters. We’re all eager to make the great, 5-G-fortified, leap forward it seems.

Many who work just off Parliament Hill are not so sure this will be the new workers’ paradise. To go from meeting to meeting on screens all day creates siloed perspectives like never before. The complexity of any issue is often predicated on how interconnected it is to other policy decisions. The web of causes, considerations and projected effects that go into any policy initiative is not virtual at all; it is real. And this is what many of us have been missing and trying to patch together in our day-to-day working lives: the wider view, the deeper perspective.

There is a different kind of reading that we’ve all been missing, and that I believe many in my profession are eager to get back to: it’s not reading the room, it’s reading the field. In the course of daily interactions, convening events that allow one to circulate and talk to people whom you would not have any opportunity to see if you were solely focused on the conversations that occur virtually, a composite picture emerges of the larger policy landscape. It’s the ability to ask questions outside of a meeting agenda, to listen to perspectives that may not seem germane to what brought you to a conversation ...

from such interactions inspired ideas and creative solutions often emerge. I think it’s these serendipitous moments of connection that we’ve all been missing.

“To go from meeting to meeting on screens all day creates siloed perspectives like never before. The complexity of any issue is often predicated on how interconnected it is to other policy decisions.”

We may never return to way things were before, but I doubt we’ll want to rely solely on the reading skills we’ve developed through this crisis. The world we work in requires a way of interacting that’s a little warmer, a lot less controlled. Yes, it’s sometimes awkward but always a more human and richer experience. As we tentatively start to hope once again for the end of this, I’m predicting the end of the reading time will bring about the renaissance of people time. **P**

Contributing Writer John Delacourt, Vice President and Group Leader of Hill & Knowlton public affairs in Ottawa, is a former director of the Liberal research bureau. He is also the author of three novels.



While the COVID-19 pandemic put all of us through unprecedented challenges and some of us through unspeakable loss, it also fuelled a solidarity based on shared values and reorganized priorities. *Food Banks Canada photo*

A Key Pandemic Takeaway: The People Prevailed

Lisa Van Dusen

In 1984, in the days when authoritarian lunacy was a distant nightmare or an ugly abstraction to residents of Western democracies, Václav Havel was asked to deliver a speech at the University of Toulouse. The Czechoslovakian playwright, who had been imprisoned multiple times for publicly advocating freedom and democracy, was, in those days, nominally at large but living in a virtual prison of constant surveillance. Tom Stoppard, whose Czech roots and human rights activism had enriched his fellow-playwright friendship with Havel, delivered the speech “Politics and Conscience” on his behalf.

“I favor ‘antipolitical politics,’ that is, politics not as the technology of power and manipulation, of cybernetic rule over humans or as the art of the utilitarian, but politics as one of the ways of seeking and achieving meaningful lives, of protecting them and

servicing them,” imparted Stoppard—then at the height of his rock stardom as the British theatre’s verbal Jagger—in his role as Havel’s avatar. “I favor politics as practical morality, as service to the truth, as essentially human and humanly measured care for our fellow humans.”

The COVID-19 pandemic was born in the most dehumanizing chapter of global politics in more than half a century. The rantings of a treasonously weaponized American president, the chaos of Britain’s Brexit drama, the perpetual cortisol spike of social media wagging the dog of democracy and the fog of obfuscating nonsense fire-hosed daily into the content sphere to undermine that democracy had all taken a toll. Human beings, misrepresented by our loudest and most belligerent specimens, were suddenly brand-trending as reckless, gullible, corrupt, dishonest and infantile. Not in generations had such a signifi-

cant swathe of politics seemed further from the ideal of “practical morality in service to the truth” that Havel espoused. In dystopian terms, replacing humans with robots had never seemed so alluring.

Of all the transformative impacts of this pandemic, the one that has struck most consistently and most indelibly has been the way in which human beings have risen to the moment. Overwhelmed by waves of the dead and dying, nurses, doctors, orderlies and EMT specialists set their fears aside to just keep doing what they do best to save as many souls as they could. Every day, the essential workers whose indispensability was suddenly so obvious kept showing up at cash registers, at prescription counters, in grocery stores...stocking aisles, driving trucks, maintaining utilities—keeping the world functioning in a crisis in ways that put the Davos men to shame.



A home-made roadside sign near Baltimore, MD., thanking some of the heroes of the pandemic.
Carissa Cifolelli Flickr photo

People. People processed the daily changes in their context and adjusted—they carved out space to teach their children, to balance the books, to hunker down, to redefine their notions of urgency and mobility and necessity and luxury and boredom and patience. Yes, there were some who commodified stupidity and politicized division but most people masked up and adapted. We assessed the unexpected and evolving changes in our risk environments. We adjusted our priorities. We stopped caring about so many superficial questions whose importance had been shrunk by the stakes of our daily decisions about whether to stay or go, to improvise or forage, to sit or move. We started—per the cliché-for-a-reason—appreciating the little things.

We read and read, getting to know our local booksellers by email and drop-off. Some of us, for reasons whose origins remain a mystery, made sourdough bread—a lockdown fad my own brownie-baking habit never gatewayed into. We Netflixed and Primed and Google-Played our captive arses off until the only thing left to watch was *Tiger King*. We had “reach” dreams about not being able to hug our grown kids. Our untrimmed lockdown locks made Zoom galleries look like the *Brady Bunch* hippies episode.

The deaths—deaths of elderly people ending their lives alone and scared,

deaths of health care workers in the line of duty, deaths of so many people who had so many better things to do—were devastating. The constant reminder of mortality, the ambient hypervigilance, grounded our perspective. Our new awareness of the fragility of life may not have produced a collective, existential epiphany that sent us all careening into the streets on Christmas Eve for an *It's a Wonderful Life* appreciation jog down Main Street (“Merry Christmas, you crazy old Canadian Tire!”, “Joyeux Noël, Jean Cou-tu!”), but it quietly sorted our values like a Marie Kondo home invasion.

Our American neighbours, perhaps in a more collective, existential epiphany for hitting in a presidential election year, chose a humanist, empathetic, competent, sane president. Life's too precious to spend in the constant company of a lunatic, they seemed to be saying. The new president took office on a glorious day for poetry and prose, and in America, as in Canada, the vaccinations went up and the death count came down.

And social media evolved as a platform for a shared experience so real and so serious, it became a crisis utility and campfire. Doctors and nurses were now influencers, Anthony Fauci usurping Kim Kardashian. Authenticity overtook contrived perfection

in Instagram posts, and toxicity was less ubiquitous. The absence of the man who had been, for four years, the provocateur, troller and Twitter IED-in-chief significantly reduced the profanity percentages. In a space where people were commiserating, sharing lockdown survival tips, seeking news and information amid life-and-death outcomes and, above all, grieving, reactive political fire seemed to recede.

Yes, the mass migration to online existence during lockdown held privacy and economic cautions. But *we kept each other company*—even when we didn't know we were doing it. The fog of a bad day could be broken by a tweet of a new baby, a dancing child, any number of animal hijinks or a hilarious political one-liner; the pall of accumulated loneliness offset by a moment of appreciation for another human being in the next town or across the world sharing the pain of a heart-breaking loss, the architectural wonder of the perfect sandwich or a spectacular sunset. That seamless sense of community gave new meaning to the E.M. Forster exhortation to “only connect” because there wasn't much else to do. Culture became group therapy. The strange intimacy of late-night show hosts working from home and interviewing unguarded, housebound celebrities made the bedtime ritual a morale-boosting public service, like a singalong in a bomb shelter.

Over a siege of more than a year, human beings proved both their compassion and their indomitability. They provided, in Vaclav Havel's words, “human and humanly measured care” for their fellow humans, on and off-line.

Back in 1984, in the margins of the text of Havel's speech, Tom Stoppard scrawled, “All political questions are moral questions.” Of course they are. **P**

Lisa Van Dusen is Associate Editor of Policy Magazine. She was Washington columnist for the Ottawa Citizen and Sun Media, international writer for Peter Jennings at ABC News, and an editor at AP National in New York and UPI in Washington.

The Social Costs of Social Distancing

Kevin Page

The word gratitude comes from the Latin word *gratia*, which infers grace, graciousness and gratitude. Medical journals and popular magazines highlight research that links gratitude to better mental health, better relationships and a reduction in anxiety. In these atypical times of a global pandemic, I feel more gratitude *and* more anxiety.

I grew up in a working-class family in northwestern Ontario. As with many Indigenous families, much of the food we ate came from hunting, fishing, berry picking and the garden. My mother insisted that we say grace before meals because that “bountiful goodness” came from mother nature. She would have agreed with G.K. Chesterton, who said: “When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude”. To my Mom, gratitude and kindness were the best path to a life of peace and happiness.

Mother Nature threw humankind and our economy a nasty curve ball in the form of a pneumonia-like disease named SARS-CoV-2 (or COVID-19). How does one express gratitude in 2021 after some 3.8 million deaths worldwide are attributed to the virus, including 26,000 deaths in Canada?

I think gratitude comes from an unprecedented and ongoing global policy response. Millions of lives and livelihoods have been saved.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), more than \$16 trillion (US) has been allocated by governments to address the fall-out on the global economy (estimated to be about (\$93 trillion US in 2021). Gov-

ernments and the private sector collaborated to develop and distribute vaccines. The World Health Organization estimates that more than 2.1 billion vaccines have been administered. Global leaders are meeting to ensure we close the vaccination gap, particularly in less developed economies. This was top of mind at the G7 Summit in the UK in mid-June.

“ I have always felt that I won a lottery in life to be born in Canada. This feeling was instilled by grandparents who fled Poland and Ukraine during periods of great hardship (my surname was changed from Paicz). ”

I have always felt that I won a lottery in life to be born in Canada. This feeling was instilled by grandparents who fled Poland and Ukraine during periods of great hardship (my surname was changed from Paicz).

Over the past year and half, I have watched our political leaders and public servants in Canada work tirelessly to save lives. Parliaments passed emergency measures to facilitate the shutting down of much of the economy to slow the spread of the unknown virus. The measures came in the form of direct fiscal supports (e.g., the wage subsidy or emergency response benefit), as well as tax deferrals and liquidity

measures totaling more than C\$600 billion in our \$2.3 trillion economy (nominal GDP).

Notwithstanding the incredible Canadian fiscal supports, the negative impact of the social distancing measures on the Canadian economy was unprecedented in our lifetime. From Chart 1, you can see the declines in real output and employment during the 2020-21 pandemic recession far outweigh the relative declines in the 2008-09 global financial crisis.

The 2020-21 global pandemic recession will have a placeholder in economic history books. Economists Eduardo Levy Yeyati and Federico Filippini estimate the total economic and social costs of the pandemic could be close to 100 percent of global GDP. You get a big number when you work through the various components of loss—long term GDP; fiscal supports; the loss of life and the human capital loss related to shutting down the economy for an extended period of time.

In the midst of a deadly contagion, governments had little choice but to implement social restrictions to contain it. Mindful that many governments and public health agencies were caught unprepared with respect to personal protective equipment, we need to better understand the costs and benefits of social distancing.

Basic models look at benefits of social distancing through the lens of the total value of lives saved. The costs are expressed simply as lost GDP. A recent study (Thunstrom, Newbold, Finnoff, Ashworth, Shogren) published online by Cambridge University Press suggest the net benefits of social distancing can be significant.

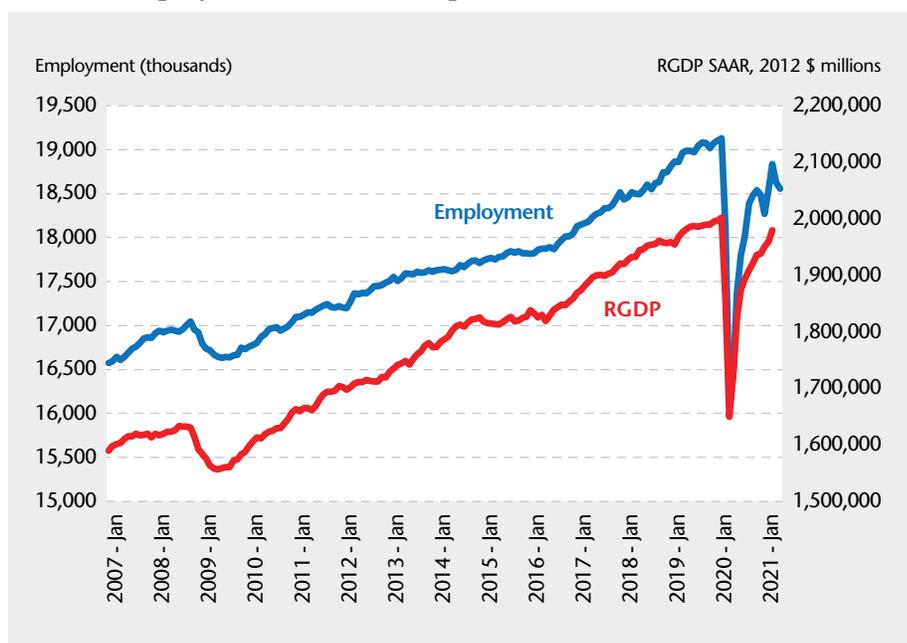
One of the key unknowns in the current cost-benefit studies is the potential for economic scarring. Significant recessions, such as the one catalyzed by the 2008 global financial crisis, have long-term impacts on business and human capital. It can take many years for output and employment to get back to their trend lines (see Chart 1). Losses may never be recouped.

As the Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz has said: “COVID-19 is not an equal opportunity virus, and the economic impact has not been an equal opportunity impact.”

“ I think we have all seen (up close) the negative human impacts of social distancing. My anxiety goes up when I see people struggling with fear of infection or loneliness exacerbated by social restrictions. ”

Saving lives with social distancing is complex. There are terrible human trade-offs. Not all lives are the same. We are different. There are

Chart 1: Employment and Real Output



Source: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics

people whose lives are vulnerable to a coronavirus (e.g., seniors, people with pre-existing respiratory and immune issues) and there are those whose lives who are more vulnerable to mental health problems; substance abuse and domestic violence that can be negatively impacted by social distancing.

I think we have all seen (up close) the negative human impacts of social distancing. My anxiety goes up when I see people struggling with fear of in-

fection or loneliness exacerbated by social restrictions. In Canada, more than 4 million people live alone. The percentage of solo dwellers aged 15 and over living in private households is about 14 percent, and has been rising over the past few decades.

The *New York Times* writer David Brooks has made the case that we must be prepared to take off our pre-covid masks once we get through the COVID pandemic. We will need to work on our collective mental health by building meaningful relationships with others. Relationships over ZOOM are not the same as the face-to-face relationships we get by gathering for social and work activities.

My mom passed away in February. About a week prior to her passing I became a grandfather. My mom's last words to me were words of gratitude and the joy of another great-grandchild. I will try not to forget the lesson of gratitude. **P**

Contributing Writer Kevin Page is President and CEO of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Democracy at University of Ottawa. He was previously Canada's first Parliamentary Budget Officer. A native of Thunder Bay, he lives in Ottawa with his family.



Elizabeth Stella Page, Passed away February 2, 2021 (92 years). Family photo



Audrey Stella Page, Born January 24, 2021. Family photo

Kinanâskomitin Miigwetch Wela'lioq Mussi cho Kukwstsétsemc Niá:wen Gùnèłchīsh Huy chexw a Gilakas'la Merçi Thank you, National Chief

**National Chief Perry Bellegarde's accomplishments
will benefit First Nations for generations.**

They include:

- Closing the Gap with more than \$45 billion in new budget investments since 2015
- Spearheading the *Indigenous Languages Act*
- Pushing for landmark legislation for Child and Family Services
- Calling out racism in Canada's policing, justice and healthcare systems
- Securing implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Ensuring Indigenous rights were included in the Paris Accord and CUSMA

**For your tireless work and so much more,
the Assembly of First Nations says thank you.**



Assembly of
First Nations





The Eden Valley Reserve, nestled in the foothills of the Rockies south of Calgary, home of the Bears paw First Nation, where a Cell on Wheels (COW) was installed to bring online services to the remote community during the pandemic. *Telus photo*

COVID and Connecting Indigenous Communities to the Digital World

Tony Geheran

When COVID-19 first hit the Bears paw First Nation, the community pulled together to care for and protect each other, as it always has.

As Bears paw Chief Darcy Dixon has often said, this is a nation made up of strong and resilient people, after all. In Eden Valley Reserve 216, in the foothills that unfurl from the Rocky Mountains southwest of Calgary, Bears paw members are no strangers to isolation. In the winter months, the local highway is impassable, leaving residents with only one way in and out of the community for months at a time.

Moreover, the remote and rumpled geography has made it challenging and costly to connect the community to a reliable broadband network.

Until the pandemic struck, cell phone service was virtually non-existent in Eden Valley, so residents travelled 30 kilometres down the road to the neighbouring town of Longview for coverage.

But if the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that connectivity is an essential service—in Chief Dixon’s words, “a basic right of all Canadians, regardless of postal code.”

It’s why, following an urgent request from Bears paw leadership, TELUS took emergency action to light up

cell service to the area and ensure that the community’s 700 residents could quickly and easily connect with public health officials—and each other—in order to stay healthy and safe.

In fact, 72 hours after TELUS got the call, a mobile cell site (also known as a “cell on wheels” or “COW”) was in place and providing coverage across the community.

These kinds of solutions are intended to be temporary—providing immediate answers to critical situations. In the case of the Bears paw First Nation, all parties agreed it was vital to act first and allow the procedures and processes for connecting such a remote community to catch up.

Now, we have designed and planned permanent wireless connectivity for this community, as we have for many Indigenous communities across Western Canada. As soon as funding is made available for Bearspaw, we will replace the 18-metre-high COW with a tower of 75 metres, providing far greater coverage and enough capacity to support the entire community.

Indeed, with funding in place and in partnership with Indigenous governments, we are confident that we can bring world-class connectivity to each and every underserved Indigenous community in the West—some as small as 14 households—within two years or less.

Ambitious? Yes. But if we have quick and efficient funding commitments in place that allow for the effective channeling of government and private sector resources, we believe this goal is achievable.

It is, however, going to take some changes in how we tackle the challenges of rural connectivity. It starts with building stronger working relationships between all levels of government and the private sector.

In the past, private companies have been left to work alone, making decisions to support the infrastructure investments based on the prospect of a reasonable return. That approach has not been conducive to connecting rural communities because, in most cases, the significant cost of these projects has meant that the economics simply don't work.

With better collaboration between the public and private sector, existing funding opportunities can be streamlined, wringing the most out of every available dollar to benefit rural and remote communities.

On this point, TELUS speaks from experience. Along Quebec's Lower North Shore, we recently connected 14 communities so remote that they can only be reached by snowmobile, boat, or helicopter. And in B.C., Alberta, and Quebec, we are bringing 5G network speeds to 149 Indigenous communities, and 366 Indigenous lands—

which include Reserves, treaty-lands and self-governing lands—by the end of this year.

None of this would be possible without all the key players coming to the table, including Indigenous, federal and provincial governments, and private partners. By working with experienced carriers that can complete projects quickly, cost-effectively, and in a way that provides connectivity that meets the needs of the community, these communities will have access to the same high-speed connectivity found in major urban centres.

Wireless solutions are typically the most effective in remote areas because of the speed with which they can be deployed and the coverage that can be enabled. For this reason, existing spectrum policy has a significant impact on our ability to bring connectivity to remote areas, and we recommend a careful reconsideration of existing spectrum policy. In particular, the practice of providing spectrum at subsidized prices for regional carriers has proven detrimental to rural connectivity: to date, approximately 85 percent of rural spectrum remains unused by set-aside eligible carriers.

We strongly believe that government has a vital role to play in making it easier and more affordable to access spectrum in rural areas, which would enable connectivity faster in communities where a wireless solution is possible.

In addition to policy, the government also has a role to play on the economics of rural connectivity. In this regard, there are promising developments underway. The Universal Broadband Fund (UBF), established by the federal government to support the rapid rollout of high-speed internet projects across the country, is an important step in the right direction. With \$2.75 billion earmarked for rural and remote communities, the UBF shows promise as a means to level the connectivity playing field for everyone in Canada, regardless of where they live.

The fund also makes up to \$50 million available to support coverage to roads and highways around Indigenous communities where mobile connectivity is lacking.

It's a process we applaud, and one that we are eagerly working with in to ensure communities like Eden Valley—which is exactly the type of community that funding mechanisms like the UBF are designed to support—get the connectivity they need to move beyond the pandemic, and enable it to grow and prosper as its residents intend.

We also understand that connectivity is so much more than sending and receiving data. It is the very foundation on which our modern society operates. It helps to drive the innovation that empowers our businesses and entrepreneurs, allows our children to learn even when our schools are closed, and ensures safe and equal access to quality health care through digital health solutions.

There is no time to lose.

On this, let's listen to Chief Dixon, whose community appreciates what is at stake more than most.

"Technology is an equalizer for our people, especially since we commonly live in remote communities and face scores of socio-economic barriers. It gives our people the fundamental rights to access essential emergency services, to access education for our children and a future they would not otherwise imagine, to access tools to preserve our language, culture and traditions, and so much more. Connectivity is about reconciliation; returning some of the opportunities taken from our people over the centuries. Indeed, it's a sovereign treaty right to be able to provide to our nation members the capacity they need to improve their lives and achieve equal standing with ordinary citizens across Canada.

"Let's quit talking and get to it." **P**

Tony Geheran is Executive Vice-President and Chief Customer Officer of TELUS.

Helping Communities Respond, from 'Hockey Hubs' to PPE

James Scongack

In mid-March 2020, a group that included public health officials from the Grey-Bruce Health Unit and CEOs from hospitals in the two Ontario counties gathered in the health unit's Owen Sound offices. The reason? To participate in a virtual town hall live-streamed through Bruce Power's website and on radio stations and cable TV across the region that informed residents about prevention and protection against the worst public-health crisis our generation has experienced.

Some 16 months later, we (hopefully) find ourselves in the final stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Canadians are getting their second vaccine shots, the number of COVID cases has been dramatically reduced, businesses are reopening, and families and friends are getting together for backyard BBQs and at cottages, parks and recreational facilities. There's increasing room for optimism that students attending elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools will be back in class and on campuses come September.

Regaining some sense of normalcy hasn't been easy. We're almost there, thanks to the extraordinary contribution of so many health care and frontline workers; government officials across the municipal, county/regional, provincial and federal levels; businesses, organizations and individuals. In times of crisis, we see the best in people and there's been a plethora of evidence to support that for almost a year and a half.

At Bruce Power, our *raison d'être* is to supply Ontario with 30 percent of the province's electricity with clean and



Volunteers help staff one of Canada's largest vaccination centres in Ontario's Peel region. Bruce Power, in partnership with Peel Public Health, brought together a coalition of organizations to establish the regional clinic, operated by Peel Public Health at the CAA Centre in Brampton. *Bruce Power photo*

reliable energy at 30 percent less than the average cost to generate residential power. We're a major contributor to the global supply of medical isotopes, which are used for the sterilization of medical supplies, and the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, not only here at home but around the world. While our company, our owners and our workers take immense pride in the production of reliable electricity and life-saving medical isotopes, we also take very seriously our social responsibility to lend a hand when it's needed.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, we've worked hard—with the generosity, leadership and innovation of our employees—to be a good corporate citizen by supporting the people on the front lines. That starts with Dr. Ian Arra, the Medi-

cal Officer of Health and CEO of the Grey-Bruce Public Health Unit, and his staff. Since that first virtual town hall in March 2020, we have collaborated with the health unit on more than a half-dozen virtual information sessions, printed and digital newsletters, advertising campaigns and other communications tools to make sure our residents had the most recent information to protect their families, friends, co-workers and neighbours against the Coronavirus.

When there were concerns our local hospitals may not have the capacity to handle a potential influx of COVID-19 patients, we worked with the health unit to create recovery facilities at community centres in Owen Sound, Kincardine and Hanover. At the be-



The mass vaccination centre in Brampton, Ontario uses a 'Hockey Hub' model in an NHL-sized rink. It provides the region the capacity for thousands of daily vaccines, building on a model used in Grey-Bruce that set a daily national record in April. *Bruce Power photo*

ginning of 2021, as larger supplies of vaccines became available, Dr. Arra and the Grey-Bruce Health Unit came up with the concept for a "Hockey Hub". Created inside hockey arenas, the typical vaccination hub has 150 pods with one nurse assigned 30 pods each. A streamlined flow-through process opened the door for a vaccinator to administer 90 vaccines per hour.

Two Bruce Power employees—Bill Whetstone from supply chain and Rick McMurray from site services—provided resources and logistical support to convert the recovery centres in Owen Sound, Hanover and Kincardine into these hockey hubs. Since then, a mass immunization hub has been created in Lambton County in southwestern Ontario, along with another hockey hub inside the CAA Centre in Brampton to lend a hand to the Region of Peel's vaccination efforts in one of Canada's COVID hot spots.

The Brampton hockey hub has been a consummate team effort, put together by a coalition of organizations—many of them under the umbrellas of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Vaccination Council—unions and businesses along with public-health officials from Grey-Bruce and Peel. "I want to thank our public health units, hospital partners, and frontline health care workers for their leadership throughout this pandemic, as well as organizations like Bruce Power and their many

partners, who have committed to supporting Ontarians through this vaccination effort," Ontario Premier Doug Ford said after touring the hub in early June. "These organizations coming together with public health to establish this hub is a demonstration of the true Ontario spirit."

As the largest employer in Bruce, Grey and Huron counties, we've been an anchor in providing economic stability for our communities since 2001. Providing jobs isn't enough, however; we have a responsibility to give back to those communities as a company and as people who live in the cities, towns, villages and rural areas throughout what we call Canada's Clean Energy Frontier. That's why we have programs that underline our commitment to safe and environmentally friendly operations, are transparent in our technologies and operations and invest in the betterment of our communities. Local Indigenous communities and municipal and county governments have worked with us to partner on programs that benefit the entire region.

That's never been more important than during the pandemic. Bruce Power, with assistance from the nuclear supply chain, has distributed almost two-million pieces of personal protective equipment. One of our nucle-

ar operators, Ronnie Miller, purchased six 3-D printers at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak and produced more than 20,000 "ear savers" to make the wearing of facemasks by health-care and front-line workers more comfortable. We were able to distribute more than 50,000 litres of hand sanitizer to local municipalities and to Indigenous communities in northern Ontario through a partnership with Junction 56, a distillery in Stratford, which redeployed its resources.

Ontario's nuclear supply chain stepped up to support the Retooling and Economic Recovery Council, established to support the fight against COVID-19 and prepare strategies for the province's economic recovery. One of those suppliers, NPX Innovation, built the Grey Bruce Huron Strong app to support local businesses. Another supplier, Abraflex, shifted some of its business to produce gowns for physicians, nurses and other health-care workers while teaming with Bruce Power and Bruce County to purchase a machine for sanitizing PPE used by health-care workers.

Along with the supply chain and other businesses connected to Bruce Power, more than \$2 million has been donated during the pandemic to help out local food banks, assist the University Health Network with research into treatment for COVID patients, lend a hand to local businesses and organizations facing financial struggles, and simply acknowledge the heroic work of the women and men in health care and long-term care facilities with gift cards and packages.

There aren't nearly enough words to recognize and thank every person who's stepped forward and contributed to these efforts in the fight against COVID-19. Each and every one of them has made a difference, and in many cases saved lives. It's that spirit of compassion, generosity and goodwill that will get us through these final months of the pandemic and carry us into the post-COVID world. **P**

James Scongack is Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs and Operational Services at Bruce Power.



A pandemic birthday, “with a sense of normalcy decidedly skewed,” writes Meredith Wilson-Smith. *Family photo*

Being Young and Vulnerable in Lockdown

Meredith Wilson-Smith

After 15 months in varying degrees of lockdown, my sense of normalcy as a 20-something is decidedly skewed.

As the world starts to reopen and we’re expected to resume our pre-pandemic lives, that presents a distinct inconvenience. My pre-pandemic life belonged to someone significantly different—more composed, but less self-aware—than the person I am now.

In the fall, I’ll be starting law school after a year of remote work. When asked if I’m excited, I hesitate to answer—not because I’m not, but because it doesn’t feel real.

I studied for the LSAT in my backyard and wrote it from my laptop. I wrote my personal statements in my childhood bedroom and received email acceptances while grocery shopping or blow-drying my hair. The degree I’ll pursue for the next three years feels like a vague concept rather than a tangible next step.

Law school is an intimidating prospect, but not for essays and lectures alone. After so long locked inside, readjusting to the real world is daunting. Even scheduling a walk feels insurmountable, although all through undergrad, I was in a new meeting or class every hour. Leaving the house feels harder.

Fortunately, my first year of law school is designed to help with that

difficult transition. The first semester will be primarily online, with optional on-site activities, and the second semester is anticipated to be fully in-person. By the time I subway to morning classes, I’ll have a better sense of the program, and—if I’m lucky—familiar faces to greet.

With my first COVID vaccine last month came what felt like the first glimmer of hope and normalcy in more than a year—but that’s intimidating, too. Your 20s are meant to be a sociable, silly, selfish time (for better or for worse). And yet, the last year has left me and my peers more serious.

We’re negotiating how to build and maintain connections with the people in

our lives without the benefit of doing so in-person. Graduating from university leaves many with a wide network of casual friends they're used to seeing on campus and at parties. However, we all have limited energy, and the emotionally challenging pandemic has forced us to realize who matters most to us so we can ensure we keep those relationships alive.

Most of my friends currently live outside Toronto, where I remain. What keeps us close is our affection for one another and the resulting effort we put into regular communication with one another, even when there's nothing interesting to say (the norm these days).

I've always been a formal, reserved person. Prior to the pandemic, my closest friends seldom saw me without a full face of makeup. I dressed up even on days I didn't leave the house. I valued a constantly composed public-facing image, and I viewed my internal self, replete with various anxieties and weaknesses, as something separate and private.

The past year has changed that mindset, and as a result, so have relationships across the board.

When your cat walks past your webcam mid-meeting, it's hard to maintain the distance from colleagues once expected. When you catch up with work friends over Zoom in your bedroom, they can see high-school memorabilia on the walls. What we've lost in privacy has been gained in relatability and comfort with others.

Vulnerability breeds intimacy—this is the tenet I've taken away from the pandemic by necessity. As a type-A personality, I've always believed it most appropriate to behave as if I had everything together to avoid passing uncertainty to those around me. But in these strange times, we see each other less, and so we rely on the interactions we do have much more—even when they're imperfect. Everything still feels uncertain, and connection is a source of comfort.

On work calls, the requisite "How are you?" is met with concerns over loved ones' vaccinations and the



After a season of dressing casually for Zoom calls, Meredith Wilson-Smith steps out for a normal social occasion. *Family photo*

stagnation of repetitive days. When I see friends now, without any dramatic life events to debrief—despite being in our early 20s, an inherently dramatic age—we discuss how we cope with our fears about being forgotten by those we care about after isolation and distance.

Starting a romantic relationship mid-pandemic was, perhaps, the most unexpected personal change of the past year, and one that sparked much of this reflection on vulnerability. Conversations about social bubbles forced us to communicate honestly about our intentions toward one another. Patio closures and stay-at-home orders made us comfortable with silence and sweatpants faster than may have otherwise occurred.

It turns out it's impossible to act mysterious and hard-to-get amidst a provincial lockdown, and I'm grateful for that. Seeing all of this tangibly pay off through my own happiness has served as proof that, while vulnerability is frightening, the relational results make it worthwhile.

When a deadly virus is at large, you have to learn to trust. The past year has taught me to trust that the people I love will still love me even when I have nothing new or exciting to say. I've learned patience in processes we can't control, like vaccination rollouts, that will bring us together again. And I've learned to have faith that I'm not alone in many of these feelings, and that nobody will be deterred if I express them openly.

“ Young people have been forced to relinquish things we realized weren't so important after all, like careless acquaintances and social veneers, and we've emotionally matured faster than we would have otherwise. ”

Despite the pandemic's horror, I admire how much my cohort has adapted and grown through the challenge of being left alone with our thoughts at an inherently uncertain and confusing age. Young people have been forced to relinquish things we realized weren't so important after all, like careless acquaintances and social veneers, and we've emotionally matured faster than we would have otherwise. We're kinder to one another and we don't take our shared experiences for granted.

We've learned to better practice gratitude for the small things, like a sunny day or a check-in phone call from a friend, and we're better for that.

Now, I just have to learn to practise as much gratitude for the mountain of law-school essays coming my way. **P**

Meredith Wilson-Smith is an incoming JD candidate at Osgoode Hall Law School, a former editor at The Globe and Mail, former editor in chief of The Queen's Journal, and a recent graduate of Queen's University.

Getting to Know Memorial University Inside a Bubble

Vianne Timmons

I have wonderful memories of my time in Saskatchewan as president of the University of Regina. Now, I am living a new life in Newfoundland and Labrador, as president of Memorial University and making new memories.

The first memory is spending weeks in a B&B.

Due to the provincial and regional bubbles that are restricting travel to Newfoundland and Labrador and the Maritime provinces, visitors are required to self-isolate for two weeks upon arrival. That meant I had to leave Regina almost like a thief in the night and stay at a B&B in downtown St. John's so I could start my new job on April 1. The stay in the B&B turned into five weeks, as my husband and two daughters arrived and we quarantined together.

The past year has been difficult for so many people in so many different ways. Personally, one of the reasons I chose to move back east was to be closer to my 87-year-old mother, who lives in Nova Scotia. I haven't seen her since October.

My new granddaughter arrived in January, but I haven't met her in person yet. I have not seen one of my daughters and two grandchildren for almost two years. I recognize this is a story that many Canadians are living.

A benefit of moving to Newfoundland and Labrador is buying a house that is a 30-minute walk from the St. John's campus. Not only do I get exercise every day by walking to work, I get time to reflect and work out issues that Memorial is facing.

Another benefit of that daily hike is running into people. An import-



The deserted campus of Memorial University in St. John's. President Vianne Timmons looks forward to its re-opening "so I can once again walk the halls, and speak with students, faculty and staff." *Memorial University photo*

ant part of my job is supporting students, and I miss them. I stop young people on the road and ask if they are Memorial students. I ask servers in restaurants if they go to Memorial. I wonder if there's a story going around St. John's about the very friendly woman who stops random people on the street to ask about their educational plans.

Memorial students are amazing. They are resilient. The switch to remote learning and dealing with the stress of the pandemic didn't slow them down. In fact, enrolment at Memorial reached an all-time high in September 2020 with more than 19,400 students. Applications for the fall semester are up as well. Our retention numbers also improved this year, which is a credit to our faculty.

“ Understanding place and culture in Newfoundland and Labrador is critically important for decision-making. You cannot understand Memorial if you don't understand the province and the people. ”

My last article for *Policy* magazine focused on my listening tour, titled on social media #talesfromtheroadMUN. I spent a

couple of months travelling the province and meeting people from all walks of life. It gave me a close-up picture of Newfoundland and Labrador and taught me so much—lessons I couldn't have learned sitting behind my desk in St. John's.

Understanding place and culture in Newfoundland and Labrador is critically important for decision-making. You cannot understand Memorial if you don't understand the province and the people. The university has a special obligation to Newfoundland and Labrador; it is in its DNA.

So, I decided the tour will continue to be part of my leadership. It was a way for people to get to know me, starting with my first video taken outside the B&B, when I also posted a blooper clip—people did seem to enjoy that! It allows me to reach out to people and groups if I can't be there physically, which will be often because the province is so large geographically.

Big changes are coming to Memorial University. Two provincial government-sponsored reports recently released (online at Public Post-Secondary Education Review and the Premier's Economic Recovery Report) suggest this is the case and it is important that I listen and learn about the province's expectations of the university.

Our way forward will be partly achieved through the development of our new strategic plan, *Transforming our Horizons*. The consultative strategic planning process began during a pandemic. It was challenging but we succeeded. The Board of Regents just approved this five-year vision for Memorial.

Along with implementing the strategic plan, we will be managing the provincial government's complex budget decisions. During the next five years, Memorial's budget will be cut by 23 percent. This is after reducing our workforce by 10 percent during the last five years and managing \$52 million in cuts.



Vianne Timmons' new granddaughter, Simone Morgan Mason arrived in January, "but I haven't met her yet." *Family photo*

The two reports referenced above recommend an end to the 22-year tuition freeze imposed by the province. This will mitigate some of the cuts. We know, as a provincial university, that we have to be part of the solution to the economic challenges the province faces. Memorial University has shown during the last year of COVID-19, and during the last five years of cuts, that it can adjust and manage in the most unpredictable circumstances.

I know there will be verbal attacks and things will get personal. My only hope is that during this past year, when I could not meet faculty, staff, students or community members in person, that I was still able to develop relationships and build trust. Only time will tell.

I hope that when the world, or, at least, the university, opens up in September, that I can once again walk the halls and speak with students, faculty and staff. Communications and build-

ing relationships will be critical during the next few years.

To survive and come out stronger as a university, we will need to ensure that our value is recognized by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We will have to work closely with government to ensure it is aware of the impact of the cuts. But, most importantly, we will need to engage faculty and staff in looking at restructuring and finding efficiencies.

I am confident as we enter these challenging times that we will emerge as a stronger and better institution. Our strategic plan is inspiring and provides us with a forward focus. I am also hopeful that I can meet my new granddaughter, see my children and other grandchildren, and spend time with my mother. **P**

Contributing Writer Vianne Timmons is President and Vice-Chancellor of Memorial University in St. John's.



In Both Constitutional and Electoral Politics, Quebec Still Looms Large

To paraphrase Samuel Johnson, nothing induces selective amnesia like the prospect of an election. And to paraphrase Daniel Johnson Sr., Quebec has launched a federal election litmus test on language rights whose signage seems to read, “Unconstitutional if necessary, but not necessarily unconstitutional.” Policy contributing writer and constitutional scholar Stéphanie Chouinard breaks down the political and legal prospects of a revised Official Languages Act and Bill 96.

Stéphanie Chouinard

The first half of 2021 has seen the reopening of an important conversation on a notoriously charged topic in Canada: language rights.

First, the federal government has begun to make good on its promise to revamp the *Official Languages Act* (OLA), a quasi-constitutional document that has not been thoroughly updated since 1988, when Brian Mulroney was in power in Ottawa. In February, Official Languages Minister Mélanie Joly presented a reform plan aimed at making the OLA more responsive to the needs of official-language minority communities who have, until recently, been the main drivers behind this reform. On June 15, she finally tabled Bill C-32, an *Act for the Substantive Equality of French and English and the Strengthening of the Official Languages Act*.

Items such as the support of community institutions, enlarging the scope of the Official Language Commissioner’s powers, and reinforcing bilingual-

ism at the Supreme Court of Canada and in the public service were high on the list of priorities of the various minority-community stakeholders. Having voiced the need for an update to the OLA for several years, they seemed generally pleased with the bill. Although this legislative amendment could not possibly be adopted before Parliament breaks for summer recess, the latest federal budget spoke to the government’s ambitions, with some \$500 million in supplementary funding announced for official language programs. Notably, close to \$200 million was earmarked for the postsecondary sector, this in the midst of a crisis after Laurentian University slashed the majority of its French-language programs and University of Alberta’s Campus Saint-Jean faced yet another series of cuts from the provincial government, bringing the centennial institution to the brink of collapse.

However, Joly’s bill did not stop at the protection of official-language minorities. One of its main goals is, on the minister’s telling, to secure the place of French

in Canada—and that includes protecting the language in Quebec. Indeed, socio-demographic data show French is slowly but surely losing importance in the country, even in the one province where it is spoken by the majority. Some of the proposals presented in Joly’s report included supporting French as a language of work in businesses under federal jurisdiction in Quebec.

But in this respect, Joly is facing some competition—from her counterpart in the Quebec National Assembly, Simon Jolin-Barrette. The minister responsible for the French language recently tabled Bill 96, which aims at modernizing Bill 101, notably by creating a French-language commissioner with sweeping investigative powers, making it easier to learn French, and limiting the creation of new English-language spaces in the province’s CÉGEPs. However, even more controversially, Bill 96 also proposes to impose Bill 101 on federally regulated businesses in the province, and to unilaterally modify the Constitution in order to recognize Quebec as a “nation” and French as its “common language”.

Not even in his wildest dreams would Robert Bourassa, in the middle of Canada’s last constitutional upheaval, have imagined such a ploy. For the Legault government, section 45 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, according to which “each province may exclusively make laws amending the constitution of the province”, would allow Quebec to go ahead with these changes without the support of the federal government or other provinces. Many legal experts have weighed

in, several of them disputing Quebec's position. What would the recognition of Quebec as a nation mean for Quebec's "nations within"—that is the Inuit and the First Nations with territorial claims all over the province? How would recognizing French as Quebec's common language affect the province's constitutional obligations toward its English-language minority (found, for example, in section 133 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*)?

These questions remain unanswered for now. The pre-emptive invoking of the notwithstanding clause in the bill is also suspect from a government that promised none of the English-speaking community's rights would be infringed by the bill.

However, when Prime Minister Trudeau himself publicly supported Quebec's constitutional plan, declaring that both of the elements Quebec wanted to enshrine were self-evident, most were taken by surprise. This would indeed seem a strange stance coming from the same man who, just a few years ago, declared Canada was a "post-national state".

But from a man with an eye on the next election, which may come as soon as this fall, this statement may not appear so strange.

Indeed, the competition between Ottawa and Quebec City for a place in Quebecers' hearts—at least the franco-phone ones—should not surprise us. Playing the identity card has always been up the Coalition Avenir Québec's sleeve, as is attested not only by Bill 96, but by Bill 21, the Legault government's far more contentious legislation, which forbids the wearing of religious symbols for almost any public office holder in the province. But while François Legault and his government have been enjoying sky-high levels of popularity for the past year and should not face the electorate for another 16 months, the federal prognosis is much different. The province, and its 78 seats in the House of Commons, are at the heart of both Trudeau's path to a Liberal majority government and Erin O'Toole's path



Quebec Premier Legault and Prime Minister Trudeau do a friendly elbow bump prior to an announcement in Trois-Rivières on March 22. *Adam Scotti photo*

to getting the Conservatives back into government. In order to secure these seats, the Liberals are attempting to brand themselves as the "champions of the French language", while the Conservatives have been trying to seduce Quebec's right-wing nationalists by making "respect for the country's two founding nations" one of their key messages.

Both parties have to contend with Yves François Blanchet's Bloc Québécois, a party that just a decade ago was nearly wiped from the electoral map, standing at just four seats after the NDP's 2011 "orange wave". Blanchet, a former senior executive in the province's music industry who won the Bloc's leadership race in January 2019, has proven to be a worthwhile opponent, and one who has played with Quebecers' heartstrings while sometimes acting as Legault's "megaphone in Ottawa".

This strategy earned the Bloc 32 seats in the 2019 election, proving it is still a force to be reckoned with. As rumours of an October federal election are growing as fast as the vaccination rates in the country, the table is set for a political showdown, where

Quebec's voters will undoubtedly be heavily courted and bill C-32, introduced too late to be adopted, will most likely find itself in the Liberal platform.

This is not to say that all Quebecers are content with this state of affairs. The province's sizeable anglophone community are feeling both let down by the federal Liberals' emphasis on protecting French in their overhaul of the OLA, and worried about the impact Bill 96 will have on the place of English in the province, notably as a language of study and as a language of work. Since the Quebec Liberals have also announced their support of Jolin-Barrette's proposals, they are finding themselves, for the first time in decades, without a political home in their own province. While they attempt to voice these concerns before both levels of government over the course of the summer, the possibility of a court challenge appears to be a likely option for them to protect their rights. **P**

Contributing Writer Stéphanie Chouinard is an Associate Professor at Royal Military College in Kingston, cross-appointed to Queen's University, specializing in the Constitution, federalism, minority and Indigenous rights and judicial politics.

Indigenous Leadership and the Economy: Saskatchewan Success Stories

The lost children of residential schools are cause for Canadians “to reckon with decades of national shame,” writes Elizabeth McNinch. But it also coincides with an emerging era of Indigenous leadership and “economic empowerment.” McNinch looks at Saskatchewan as a case study in business success stories.

Elizabeth McNinch

While the nation weeps over the 215 lost children of the Kamloops Residential School—and, per the conclusions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, the many thousands more—our national conscience begins to reckon with decades of national shame. Meanwhile, there is a parallel, positive movement afoot amongst Indigenous people.

The cry for justice is impassioned across this country.

But something else is happening here. Indigenous leaders and their communities are tackling the repressive, colonial policies of the past head on. Positive. Confident. Courageous.

This is a story about economic empowerment. From small Indigenous entrepreneurs to multimillion-dollar partnerships with non-Indigenous firms across many sectors. This is about an Indigenous economy on the upswing and communities taking control of their own destinies.

Saskatchewan’s 74 First Nations inhabit a land with over 6,000 years of history; ancient peoples, ancient languages. By 2045, it is estimated 32 percent of the Saskatchewan population

will be Indigenous. Today, one third of Saskatchewan youth under the age of 18 are of aboriginal descent.

“**Indigenous leaders and their communities are tackling the repressive, colonial policies of the past head on. Positive. Confident. Courageous.**”

Overall, when looking at numbers since 2006, the Indigenous population in Canada as a whole has grown by a breathtaking 42.5 percent. Our Indigenous market, as of 2016, contributes \$32 billion to the national economy with projections as high as \$100 billion by 2025.

In July 2019, *Industry West* magazine brought together six Indigenous Saskatchewan business leaders, ground-breakers in creating opportunities for the communities they represent. They agreed that a substantial part of real reconciliation is about achieving influence for their people,

as well as carving out new opportunities for the youth of today and the generations yet to come.

There is no doubt that colonial-settler policies over the centuries have contributed to huge socioeconomic gaps between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples. Guy Lonechild, CEO of Saskatchewan’s First Nations Power Authority, pointed to the Indian Act as the principal systemic obstacle to full Indigenous participation in the Canadian economy. Chief Darcy Bear of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation added: “It wasn’t put there for us to succeed. It was created to segregate us, to keep us out of sight, out of mind.”

Systemic racism and colonialism worked together as the engines of the residential schools and the concerted effort to destroy Indigenous ceremonies such as the potlatch. The idea was to destroy the arts and culture of an ancient people. The soul of an ancient people.

The idea was to populate the prairies with shadows of once proud aboriginal nations. Shadows no more.

As Ron Hyggen, CEO of Athabaska Basin Security and Peace Protection put it so well in the *Industry West* discussions, “Entrepreneurs have to come from our side of the world, because that’s what’s going to run the future.”

Our side of the world. Building new leadership. Learning about new markets. Training young people for jobs in software. Securing mining scholarships for women and Indigenous people. Developing Indigenous partnerships with Orano Canada Inc and Cameco. With its focus on “Educa-



Participants at Indigenous Business in Saskatchewan, a roundtable initiated by *Industry West* magazine. At Dakota Dunes Casino on Whitecap Dakota First Nation Territory (L to R) Shelley Pinacie, Brad Darbyshire, Guy Lonechild, Ron Hyggen, Devon Fiddler, Patrick Dinsdale. David Carter photo, *Industry West* magazine

tion for Everyone”, Saskatchewan’s post-secondary sector serves as a model for the nation in supporting Indigenous students.

“It’s all about working together and listening to the elders,” reflected Chief Bear. A great tribute to his leadership stands now at the Dakota Dunes Hotel near and the beautiful golf course that’s a major tourist attraction in the province. Bear’s Lac La Ronge Indian Band and the Muskeg Lake First Nation financed the complex, working with the Bank of Montreal. The future will be built on what our old people talked about, he said during the Roundtable. “We have to build partnerships to go forward.”

Guy Lonechild praised the Whitecap Dakota governance structure that builds trust: “It speaks about accountability, it speaks about transparency, it speaks about partnership and collaboration, and building and sustaining trust.” He should know. The First Nations Power Authority’s collaboration with SaskPower has meant \$50 million in Indigenous procurement and a recent 20-megawatt Solar Opportunity Agreement.

As a major force for advancing renewable energy, Lonechild points to the Cowessess First Nation’s wind and battery storage project. But many First Nations in the province are building to scale, advancing renewable energy power while focusing on the needs of their communities. These are the first steps on the road to economic reconciliation, said Lonechild in *Industry West*. “It ensures that Indigenous people are actively participating in the economy in a significant way.”

Over the course of history, business on the Northern Plains was all about the bison hunt; a highly disciplined regime involving thousands of people. Order and justice were critical to subsistence and survival on the prairie. So, too, was the key virtue of generosity to all.

Thomas Benjoe, President and CEO of FHQ Developments—which was founded by the 11 member First Nations of File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council—is now the youngest individual ever elected chair of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. He is a big promoter of building Indigenous wealth through partnerships

with non-Indigenous enterprises, equity ownership and the development of Indigenous businesses, over 500 of which are members of the Chamber.

As he points out in a recent article in *Report on Business*: “Indigenous business practices are inextricable from the core teachings of the Nehiyaw (Cree), Dakota, Nakota, Lakota and Anishinaabe (Saulteaux) First Nations they serve: *Miyo-wîcêhtowin* (or “the principle of getting along well with others, having good relations and expanding the circle”), *Wîtaskêwin* (“living together on the land”) and *Pimâcihowin* (“making a living”).”

Think of the ancient symbol of the Medicine Wheel. For Canada’s First Nations, it is representative of our interconnectedness with all creation. We are all on this journey together.

The story of Chief Jerry Asp’s long-time push for both the prosperity and inclusivity of the Tahitan First Nation in Northern B.C. was through direct participation in the mining industry. That meant the bottom line and Indigenous community values worked hand in glove. Asp brought this model to the world when he

co-founded the Global Indigenous Development Trust.

Think of the recent single largest Indigenous investment by a coalition of Mi'kmaq communities across Atlantic Canada through their acquisition of 50 percent of Clearwater Seafoods. As Chief Terry Paul of the Membertou First Nation was quoted in a recent *Globe and Mail* article: "We explained (to Clearwater) that we were in this for the long run because fishing was part of our identity and that we wanted to be fishing until the end of time."

The message to non-Indigenous entrepreneurs is clear. Canada's First Nations are open for business. But community engagement is essential. Establishing relationships of respect and caring are based in the traditional Lakota expression, *mitakuye oyasin*, which is generally translated as "we are all related." Because we are all on this journey together, we must prioritize our beautiful environment.

None of this is new.

Ask yourself how, in the centuries after early contact with Europeans, the

coureurs des bois broke open a vast continent, always moving forward, conquering great rivers and expanding through the Mississippi as far south as Louisiana. The Montreal Nor'Westers, heirs to the French Canadian fur trade, followed in their wake. As did the Hudson's Bay traders across Rupert's Land.

Without bonds of kinship with the First Nations, there would have been no fur trade. No survival in horrific winters. No portaging magnificent rivers. No understanding of dark forests.

Indigenous people took the traders in. To their families, to their communities and their kin, no matter how scattered across the enormity of this immense land. Biracial communities founded great cities, small towns and settlements across the Great Lakes and the prairie. Jacques Rousseau (1905-1970), Quebec's respected ethnohistorian and biologist, has estimated that at least 40 percent of Quebecers, perhaps many more, have at least one Indigenous ancestor.

Mixed unions across the vast stretches of northern Canada will probably

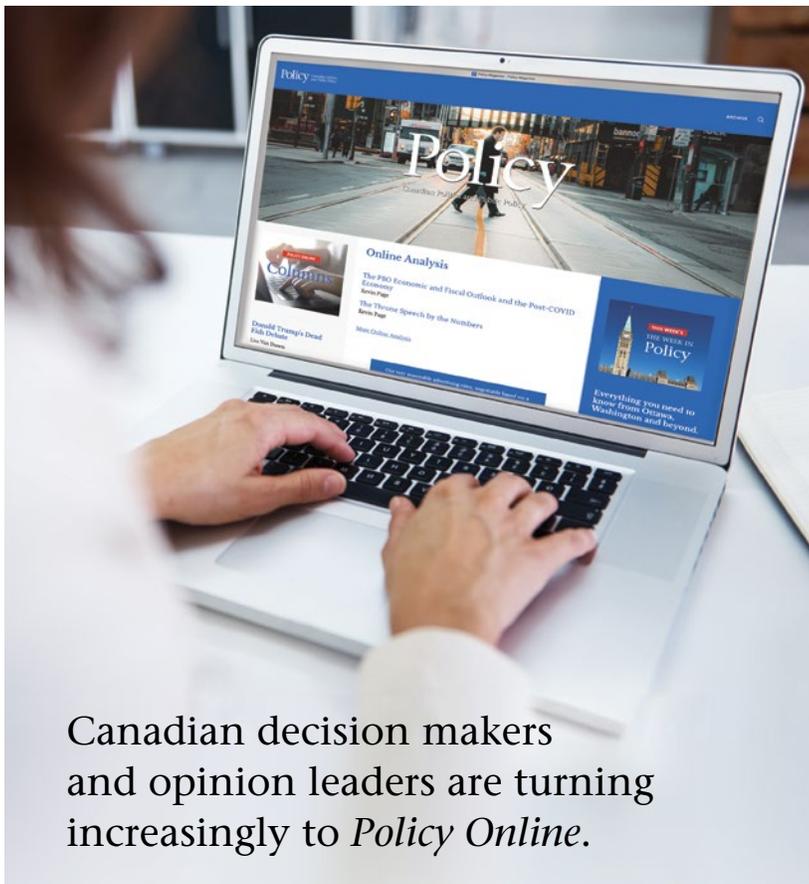
never be properly estimated. Like our surging Canadian rivers and quiet gurgling channels and magnificent lakes all tied into one, ethnohistory remains an ambiguous part of Canada's past.

But Indigenous values lay at the heart of the opening of a vast continent to the early Europeans. And they are at the heart of partnerships with non-Indigenous businesses today.

Now, more than ever, as an exhausted, endangered planet demands deliverance from our years of exploitation and greed, we need to remember the balance of the Medicine Wheel and the interconnectedness of all mankind.

As Ron Hyggen put it so well, "the future will come from our side of the world." We need to walk that world. We need to understand it and protect it. That's how real reconciliation will happen. **P**

Elizabeth McNinch is a book editor, speechwriter, and former archivist to Former Prime Minister John Napier Turner. She is a recent graduate of the Saskatchewan government's Indigenous Awareness Programs.



Canadian decision makers and opinion leaders are turning increasingly to *Policy Online*.

Policy Online

Policy's guaranteed readership of decision makers is expanding daily with *Policy Online* at policymagazine.ca. With Analysis from Canada's best policy minds, Columns from our most talented political players, our weekly global review—*The Week in Policy*—Book Reviews and Special features, there's always something new at *Policy Online*.

As our political and policy community faces unprecedented challenges, *Policy* has become a forum for innovative ideas, serious solutions and great reading.

We now offer combined rates for ad space in our print edition, at *Policy Online* and/ or in *The Week in Policy*.

For further information, contact: lianmacdonald@gmail.com

PolicyMagazine.ca

We Have to Talk about ... Vladimir Vladimirovich

After four years during which the Washington-Moscow relationship served as a testament to Donald Trump's ludicrousness—both policy and performative—the reset of American global diplomacy that took President Joe Biden from Cornwall to Brussels to Geneva over less than a week in June came to Vladimir Putin on June 16th. Policy foreign affairs sage and former Canadian Ambassador to Russia Jeremy Kinsman places the Biden-Putin bilateral in the context of Putin's tenure.

Jeremy Kinsman

In the wake of the remarkable bilateral between US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Geneva on June 16th, hereby some background for context.

After two decades under Vladimir Putin, Russia has gone from a wobbly start-up democracy to become a flat-out repressive autocracy. Western media see Putin as all-powerful. To them, Russia is Putin. The Kremlin plays to that conflation. It enables portrayal of opponents to Putin by Russian media as traitors to Russia, even as “terrorists” who may expect the harshest punishment from the all-powerful state, as Alexei Navalny's fate illustrates.

But Putin may not be the all-powerful decider that he seems. In *Weak Strongman, The Limits of Power in Putin's Russia*, Timothy Frye describes a “sistema” of governance of “extreme delegation,” based on a “host of informal rules and personal relationships that balance the interests of different elite networks.”

Putin has to make constant trade-offs: enough repression to keep opposition down but not so much as to provoke mass protest; sufficient corruption to keep the rewards system lubricated but not to the point it becomes publicly repulsive. To placate and reward the Chechen dictator Ramzan Kadyrov, who quashed Islamist rebellion, Putin tolerates his vengeance contract murders of his enemies, including probably Anna Politkovskaya, and Boris Nemtsov.

“**Disgusted foreign reaction has little impact on Putin, so long as the Russian people get the composite message that resistance is futile, and opposition useless.**”

Disgusted foreign reaction has little impact on Putin, so long as the Rus-

sian people get the composite message that resistance is futile, and opposition useless. But such messaging to Russians may be increasingly unproductive.

When he succeeded Boris Yeltsin in 2000 as president of a country on the verge of breakdown, Putin declared a bargain: Russians would “quiet down” and he would deliver order, security, and stability. Russian incomes and Putin's popularity rose with the price of oil and a victory over violent Chechen separatists. The deal held for a decade.

But by 2010, a revived educated and professional class had travelled enough to see how “normal” countries worked. They chafed under their confinement in a state of political infancy. After his two allotted terms as president, Putin had become prime minister. His casual revelation that he and seat-warmer Dmitry Medvedev had cut a deal to bring Putin back to the presidency in a “non-consecutive” new mandate angered a lot of people. Clumsily rigged 2011 parliamentary elections compounded the insult, shocking Putin with the biggest protests since the 1990s. Once back as president, he doubled down on the authoritarian playbook, ordering laws that severely limited protests and imposing harsh penalties for unauthorized demonstrations.

His steady, incremental subtraction of democratic space and obliteration of checks on his power fuelled growing pushback, including against crony corruption. Navalny became the shaper and face of a highly organized movement for “Russia without Pu-



US President Joe Biden and Russia's Vladimir Putin shake hands at their first summit meeting in Geneva on June 16. TASS photo

tin,” that became the acknowledged, if electorally ineligible, opposition.

Putin has occasionally spoken of his traumatic reaction (as an embattled KGB officer) in Dresden to the vast crowds that took to the street in the 1989 revolution against the East German regime. Once he became President, he took to telling Russians they needed a Great Russia, not a revolution. In 2014, the pro-democracy Maidan uprising in Kiev ousted Russian ally Viktor Yanukovich. It also spoiled Putin's Great Russia showcase, the Sochi Winter Olympics. He saw it as a “Western” conspiracy against Russia. He feared the anti-corruption agitation in Ukraine could be contagious. He improvised a retaliatory grab of traditionally “Russian” Crimea that diverted critical attention. His popularity again soared.

But Navalny kept his foot on the gas, as sanctions and a sagging oil price slowed the

economy down. State support for ragtag self-proclaimed Eastern Ukraine separatists was costly. By 2020, Levada polls showed that 82 percent of Russians felt Ukraine should be an independent state.

“ The Putin playbook aims to induce public apathy, a form of resignation based on the belief that efforts to change the political environment would be wasted. ”

Polling by the Russian Academy of Sciences revealed Russians cared less about the great power status Putin championed than they did about economic development. The Russian

intervention in Syria launched in 2015 to save the Assad regime from rebel groups, including ISIS, had succeeded but didn't impress Russians much.

The Putin playbook aims to induce public apathy, a form of resignation based on the belief that efforts to change the political environment would be wasted. The wild attempt to fatally poison Navalny was meant to scare the opposition into submission. Dictators who maintain control by keeping people scared run the risk of seeming scared of the people. Seeming cowardly is not a popular look.

That is the sort of scenario Navalny was working on until the state tried and failed to assassinate him and then jailed him, banning his organization and prosecuting associates as “terrorists.” No doubt many Russians are intimidated, but it has cut into Putin's credibility and popularity, probably by 20 percent. The United Russia party he founded but from

which he has now detached, is polling at 24 percent. Yet, for many in Russia, life overall has become pretty good, at least in the cities where professional opportunities are plentiful enough. North Americans are unaware of improvements to infrastructure, services, and cultural and entertainment amenities that have vastly enhanced lifestyles. The economy is flat but the effect of Crimea sanctions has been well managed, with no state debt, and a huge reserve fund.

By Putin's measures of success, there is a lot in this to celebrate. Instead, so much communications energy goes to over-the-top competitive disinformation against "the West." RT and other sources systematically defame western liberal democracies as false, failing, and weak in an apparent effort to refute the notion that objective truth even exists. While relentlessly interfering in other peoples' democracies, Russia portrays itself as victimized.

Putin's adolescent posturing, interference in democracies, and tolerance—if not direction—of hacking and ransomware attacks from Russia, have made Russia unpopular. In December 2020, Pew reported that only 16 percent of Swedes, 19 percent of Americans, 24 percent of Britons, 33 percent of Germans and 30 percent of Canadians held a positive view of Putin. The Kremlin lauds its close relationship with China, but that makes a lot of Russians nervous. Indeed, a 2020 Levada poll revealed that 67 percent thought that Russia and the West should be partners and only 16 percent saw them as rivals.

Meanwhile, COVID's effect has been mixed. Sputnik V was an early vaccine achievement. But fatalistically-inclined Russians are unusually vaccine-reticent. Civil registry data show 475,000 excess deaths over 2019, far more than the official COVID death count. Moscow buzz is that Putin's isolation inside a remote

“North Americans are unaware of improvements to infrastructure, services, and cultural and entertainment amenities that have vastly enhanced lifestyles.”

bubble during COVID has cost him his touch with people. He wouldn't be the first fading populist dictator to lose it. Like aging bullfighters' eyes, it's usually what goes first.

Nor would Putin be the first autocrat to grasp that he has no contract for a comfortable retirement. He bought time via revisions to the Constitution that will give him another 12 years. But he needs to keep control; he can either lighten up on repression, or double down. The way he played Navalny's threat and global surveillance-state trends in anti-democracy datelines indicate he favours the latter.

As to whether Putin is less in sync with his public than he thinks, there are competing assessments:

- he is just so self-confident and indifferent to others' opinions, he can do what he wants;
- actually, he's not in charge of everything at all, but trying to manage all kinds of free-lancing interests competing against each other, or
- both are partially true, inducing a mix; he's erratic because he's running scared.

Putin's absurd defence of the January 6 rioters at the US Capitol, arguing along with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and a few fringe Republicans that "those people (who) had come with political demands" were being "persecuted", and his comedic support for Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko in the wake of the state hijacking of a civil airliner betray an imperative to reinforce anti-democracy interests, wherever they exist. It was revealing too of Putin's basic inexperience with the wider world which he ap-

praises via the echo chamber of insularity in which he lives.

Surely, Putin can get a better grip on credibility with a more impressive message. That was a point President Biden inferred when they met in Geneva June 16. A big unknown for this June 16 Summit was which Putin would show up? The sardonic, resentful, spoiler? That act is losing its appeal for Russians tiring of the ex-martial arts champion's constant need to win every bout.

Putin was still semi-sarcastic after the meeting. But he was businesslike in the meeting; respectful, professional. He showed cooperative instincts on foundational multilateral issues of global warming, global health, nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and on the Arctic, and Afghanistan.

Both leaders came to Geneva to manage risks. Biden wanted to encourage Putin's better instincts but make sure he understood Biden's obligation to respond to interference and aggression.

He willingly concedes Putin's enduring grievance that it can't be a US-run world. But Biden won't accommodate Russian cyberattacks and disinformation that Putin prizes as a cost-effective way to compete. He made the point that it's not working, abroad or at home.

We'll see if Vladimir Vladimirovich gets that and where it goes from here. **P**

Contributing Writer Jeremy Kinsman is a former Canadian Ambassador to Moscow, former Ambassador to the European Union and former High Commissioner to London. He is a Distinguished Fellow of the Canadian International Council.



Column / Don Newman

The Oil Holdouts vs. Reality

Has reality finally hit the oil industry? And if it has, will the Alberta United Conservative Party, Premier Jason Kenney and the national Conservative Party follow suit? Will fighting a rearguard action to protect the oil patch from change and entrench the industrial status quo continue indefinitely?

Over the years, oil and natural gas have made Alberta incredibly rich. So rich, it alone among the provinces did not need a provincial sales tax even as it enjoyed the lowest personal taxes and the highest level of services of any province. And despite occasional bumps when oil prices would suddenly drop, Albertans thought it would last forever. Since the 1980s, every time world oil prices dropped, they rebounded. Alberta quickly recovered and the cash came rolling in again.

But now things have changed. It started in 2014. That happened when oil prices fell and they haven't yet come back to where they were when the downward run started. And they won't come back to those lofty heights over \$100 a barrel any time soon—if ever. Even though the looming price drop was clear to many people, not many of those people lived in Alberta. They continued to believe oil prices would remain high, and that a number of pipeline proposals to get Alberta's oil to the Pacific Coast in British Columbia or through the United States to the Gulf of Mexico in Texas would become reality in spite of receding social license, growing political costs and, perhaps most fateful of all, global investment trends.

In retrospect, it seems like an act of almost wilful blindness not to see the possibility of what was likely to

happen. In July 2014, when oil prices were over \$100 a barrel, a breakfast meeting of top politicians and oil industry leaders at the Calgary Stampede was told some disquieting news by an out-of-province forecaster. His message: Neither the Keystone pipeline through the US nor the Northern Gateway pipeline to Kitimat on the northern B.C. coast were likely to get final approval and be built. Worse for the assembled audience was the final prediction: Within a year the world price of oil could fall to \$50 a barrel.

The immediate reaction was a moment of stunned disbelief and then to attack the messenger. Both pipelines would go ahead, he was told, and oil would never fall below \$100 again. I know that's what happened because I was the messenger. And the prediction was correct. The price of oil went into a rapid decline over the next six months, and later, Enbridge dropped plans for Northern Gateway in the face of environmental and Indigenous opposition.

But now things have changed even more definitively. The company proposing Keystone has pulled the project. That company earlier changed its name from Trans Canada Pipelines to TC Energy to make it sound less "foreign" to US regulators, but President Joe Biden cancelled the approval permit anyway under intense pressure from American environmentalists. The cancellation came in June, the same month that the five biggest producers from the Alberta oil sands announced they were cooperating to form the Pathways to Net Zero partnership to work on achieving Canada's target of net-zero" greenhouse

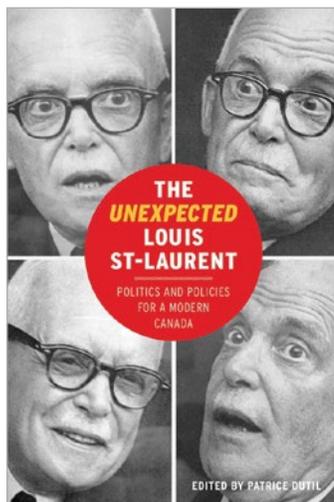
gas emissions by 2050. At least one of those pathways is increased carbon capture projects, which take the emissions produced in the oil sands and forces them underground and out of the atmosphere.

The realization that not all pipelines are good and that the oil industry is going to have to be responsible in fighting global warming are welcome changes to many Canadians. Not so sure is Premier Kenney, who is threatening litigation. Not so sure either is the federal Conservative Party. At a virtual convention earlier this year, the membership voted down a resolution saying the party recognized that climate change was a serious environmental threat. They defeated that resolution, although two days earlier new party leader Erin O'Toole had devoted a major part of his keynote speech to stressing that climate change is serious. The delegates' repudiation of both their leader and climate change was an embarrassment.

Conservative politicians from Alberta have fought to protect the oil industry because it has been their huge benefactor. But now the industry is realizing that things have permanently changed and will likely change even more as the politicians change with it. Will Alberta stop clinging to a fading past and use its vitality and vision to create a new economy that still has oil and gas, also other forms of energy and 21st century industries to fuel its economic growth? For Albertans, and us all, that is the hope. **P**

Policy Contributing Writer and columnist Don Newman is a lifetime member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and author of the bestselling [Welcome to the Broadcast](#).

SUMMER READING



Uncle Louis— A Quiet Man of Excellence

Patrice Dutil, Editor

*The Unexpected Louis St-Laurent:
Politics and Policies for a Modern
Canada*

Vancouver, UBC Press, 2021

Review by
Anthony Wilson-Smith

Born 17 years after Confederation, first elected to office in 1942, defeated as prime minister 64 years ago: Louis St-Laurent seems an unlikely choice to be having a moment now, in the second century after his birth. But that is the case. In January, the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada held an online symposium entitled *Rediscovering Louis St-Laurent*, dissecting his legacy. Written articles since have done the same. Now comes the most comprehensive effort yet—*The Unexpected Louis St-Laurent: Politics and Policies for a Modern Canada*.

Edited by political scientist Patrice Dutil, with entries from an all-star team of fellow political historians, the book explores St-Laurent's achievements in close detail. Among them, Dutil notes, huge infrastructure proj-

ects including the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Trans-Canada Highway; creation of the Registered Retirement Savings Plan; university funding, pension and old age assistance reform, support for the disabled, establishment of the equalization program to help have-not-provinces; establishing the Supreme Court as the final judicial body of decision; the entry into Confederation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

And yet, St-Laurent was ignored or dismissed by many political analysts for decades. The late historian Donald Creighton described St-Laurent as a charmless “company chairman” who was, by his account, lucky enough to come to office in a boom era for Canada.

As we learn in a fond, exquisitely-written chapter by St-Laurent's grand-daughter, Jean Thérèse Riley, St-Laurent was a reluctant politician who came to public life only out of duty, eschewed partisan politics; and deflected credit to others.

He was turning 60, one of the country's most prominent lawyers, and compensated accordingly, when he agreed to a request from Mackenzie King to join cabinet in 1942. He planned a quick return to private life, but stayed, building a reputation for quiet efficiency and consolidating Liberal support in Quebec. A grateful King supported St-Laurent to succeed him when he stepped down in 1948. At 66, St-Laurent was the oldest person then or since to step into the position.

St-Laurent emerges as a man with his eye on the future, but habits rooted in the past. Born to a francophone father and Irish-origin, unilingual anglophone mother in Quebec's Eastern Townships, he identified as francophone, but crossed easily between the language groups. His bicultural upbringing was part of what Jean Charest—himself a native of nearby Sherbrooke—describes as a “Townships mentality”.

The qualities Charest ascribes to St-Laurent include “practicality” and a “show-me attitude that defies easy

assurances, a tough-minded spirit that waves away superfluous attitudes and lofty ambitions.”

St-Laurent presided over one of the most prolonged periods of economic growth in Canada's history. As Luc Julliet and Luc Bernier write, he oversaw the modernization of the apparatus of government even as he was seen as “low-key and cautious”. They observe that his “willingness to inspire and lead” gave a strong cabinet the ability to move.

Journalist and economic historian Mary Janigan, in her chapter on the equalization program, describes St-Laurent as “the deceptively avuncular corporate lawyer [who] dragged Canadian federalism, along with some dubious premiers, from the 19th into the 20th century.” Much of his success lay in his ability to manage an age-old issue; the competing demands, interests (and egos) of the country's premiers.

Why, then, is St-Laurent not given more credit as a builder of modern Canada? Janigan offers an explanation that contemporary-era politician Jack Pickersgill once provided between the ways in which King and St-Laurent operated. When King saw a problem, Pickersgill said, he would vacillate till everyone saw it—and “when he found a solution, even if it was not topnotch, everyone concluded he was a great statesman.” By contrast, “St-Laurent often found a solution before most Canadians, including some of his cabinet colleagues, even knew there was a problem.”

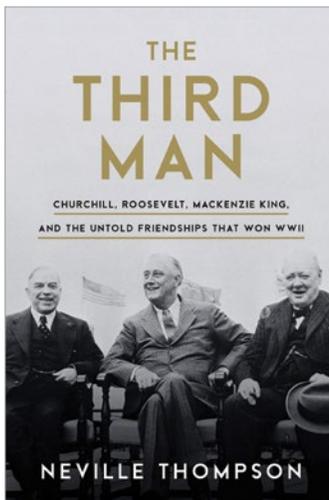
That description limns the quality that was a blessing and curse for St-Laurent—the ability to make hard things seem easy. When he and the Liberals were upset by John Diefenbaker and the Conservatives in the 1957 election, there were several reasons. The Liberals seemed complacent after 22 consecutive years in power and St-Laurent, 75 and never an enthusiastic campaigner, showed poorly against the vigorous Diefenbaker.

Once St-Laurent left office, he had little interest in maintaining a public presence or taking credit for his

achievements. He retreated to his house on Quebec City's Grande Allée, where he died in his bed at 91 in 1973. He was buried in his hometown of Compton, with a burial stone smaller, by his wish, than that of his father.

As Jean Riley writes, "he was put to rest as he had wanted, and as he had lived, in that unassuming way that was his." With this superbly-executed, comprehensive book, he now gets the tribute he would not have asked for—but nonetheless deserves. **P**

Contributing Writer Anthony Wilson-Smith is President and CEO of Historical Canada, and former Editor of Maclean's magazine.



The Middleman

Neville Thompson

The Third Man: Churchill, Roosevelt, Mackenzie King and the Untold Friendship that Won WWII
Sutherland House Books, 2020

Review by Don Newman

He was the one at the edge of the iconic photograph; the one looking extremely pleased to be included. The third wheel on the two-wheeled Allied bicycle that ultimately crushed Adolf Hitler and his murderous Nazi war machine.

At least that is the way most Canadians saw him at the time. And it is the way he is remembered now when he is thought of at all. But William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canada's 10th prime minister, was a lot more than

that. As carefully documented in historian Neville Thompson's aptly titled and compelling book, *The Third Man*, King played a bigger and often key role in developing and supporting the friendship and cooperation of Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt that underpinned the Atlantic alliance.

The role that King was able to play in acting as mediator, middleman and occasional conduit and interpreter for messages between Roosevelt and Churchill was greatly helped by the fact that he knew both men before the war started. His and Churchill's paths crossed in Ottawa in 1900. King was then an up-and-coming public servant in the federal government. Churchill was early on in his career of being CHURCHILL, a one-named, all-caps worldwide celebrity that started in 1899 after he escaped from a Boer prison camp while covering the South African War and then immortalized it as an adventure in newspaper articles, books and speeches.

In fact, Churchill was in Ottawa as part of a North American tour speaking about his exploits. The meeting was at Government House—now Rideau Hall—which visiting British aristocrats treated like an early Air B&B as the Governor General was, in those days, a fellow British aristocrat. That meeting didn't register much with King and not at all on Churchill. But a second encounter in London in 1906 set them off on a friendship and collaboration that lasted through each being in and out of office—and back in again—that lasted through the Depression and the Second World War until King's death in 1950.

King probably crossed paths with Franklin Roosevelt at Harvard University in 1921 when, during his first term as prime minister, he received an honorary degree while Roosevelt was on the Harvard Board of Overseers. Neither man seemed to have any recollection of a meeting. But by October of 1935, Roosevelt was in his first term as president of the United States. He invited King, who had only recently returned to office, to visit him and stay in the White House. The ostensible reason was to sign a limited free trade agreement, which they did. But the real reason was to start a collaborating friendship that was every bit as close as the one King had developed with

Churchill. It was during that visit that Roosevelt asked King to help facilitate good relations with Britain. The Canadian prime minister readily agreed.

Relying to a great extent on the diaries in which King meticulously recorded the events, conversations and impressions of the people he had met, along with his triumphs and disappointments, Thompson reveals that King at times before the war had critical views of both Churchill and Roosevelt. Before their meeting in 1935, he had regarded Roosevelt's New Deal economic program as too radical and interfering in the market economy. Another time he wrote that the President's "demagoguery" was as bad as Hitler's.

Throughout most of the 1930s, Churchill was out of office in Britain; a Conservative parliamentarian at odds with his government's appeasement of Germany and calling for Britain to re-arm. That was not the way King saw it. As prime minister of Canada in 1938, he sent a congratulatory message to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain after the latter signed an agreement with Hitler giving Germany about half of Czechoslovakia in return for the spectacularly naive quid pro quo of "Peace in our Time." Just less than a year later, the war started after Germany invaded Poland and Chamberlain's agreement came to symbolize for posterity the futility of appeasement. Still, King held on to his original views, telling his diary that Churchill's call for re-armament made him "one of the most dangerous men I have ever known."

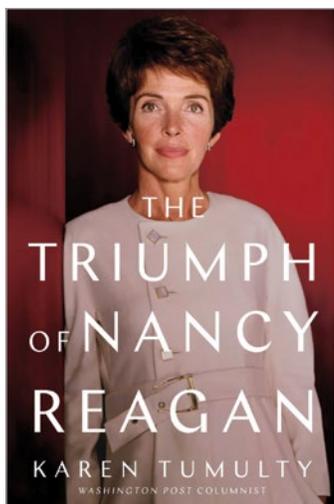
But those disagreements vanished, particularly as the war progressed. King was sometimes able to mediate differences between the British prime minister and the American president. He also used his place of influence to get Canada as much recognition as the others were willing to give for our country's contributions.

At the time, King's most widely recognized role as a partner in the Atlantic alliance was at the two Quebec Conferences during the war at the Citadel in Quebec City—the first in August of 1943, the second in June of 1944. At each, King's participation had to be carefully negotiated. The Canadian Prime Minister was a trusted confidant of both men, but it was Churchill and Roosevelt who were running

the war. King understood that and was not present in the closed negotiating sessions. But since he had meals with the other two leaders and understood all the issues, he played a *de facto* role in both sets of talks, although not a pivotal one.

Still, the conferences were in Canada, on his political turf, which both burnished King's brand as a statesman and provided some recognition to the thousands of Canadians serving, and lost in, the war effort. During an existential battle for freedom, King was in all the photographs of both Quebec conferences, alongside the two leaders history would name as its heroes. A third man perhaps, but a very visible third man. **P**

Policy Contributing Writer and columnist Don Newman is a lifetime member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and author of the bestselling Welcome to the Broadcast.



The Flawed, Formidable Nancy Reagan

Karen Tumulty

The Triumph of Nancy Reagan
Simon & Schuster/April 2021

Review by Arlene Perly Rae

Traditional guidance recommended to the mother of the groom: Show up. Shut up. Wear beige. It neatly, (though perhaps not as succinctly), echoes counsel commonly given to

the female spouses of politicians.

To “charm and disarm”, soften and prettify—usually through persistent references to children and family—is encouraged as a political wife’s asset mission. Adherence to this formula is meant to balance and humanize the persona of the typical, ambitious political guy.

Strategists insist that this conventional, submissive behaviour boosts the perception of a politician, increasing his appeal to potential voters. Or so the theory goes.

That advice did not register with Nancy Reagan. She was not cut from that predictable cloth. Besides, her spouse was tremendously popular, known as a regular guy—folksy and engaging. And Nancy, well, she just wasn’t.

Nancy is remembered for “the gaze”; her adoring, unwavering stare at her beloved “Ronnie”, otherwise known as governor of California (1967-1975) and 40th President of the United States (1981-1989), Ronald Wilson Reagan.

But the gaze was for the public. Her private behaviour as wife, mother and partner was very much at odds with the stereotypical political wife model of her era.

According to biographer Karen Tumulty—a longtime *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times* reporter and columnist—in her thoroughly researched, comprehensive biography, *The Triumph of Nancy Reagan*, this particular former First Lady, though small in stature, was a commanding and significant influence in Washington.

Tumulty expands on the longstanding conventional wisdom that Nancy was smart, politically canny and held a great many opinions she was not hesitant to share. She meddled constantly in Ronald Reagan’s political campaigns and, moreover, actively intervened and imposed her will throughout his government. Many were afraid of her. Senior staff ignored her at their peril, with White House Chief of Staff Don Regan’s departure the most notorious cautionary tale.

Nancy put pressure on hirings and (more often) firings. President Reagan himself was apparently far too nice to personally ever let anyone go. Sticky decisions like that, he delegated.

She ruled her husband’s schedule,

including the often bizarrely chosen timing of all travel and announcements. After the assassination attempt that nearly killed him on March 30, 1981 three months into his first term, and until years later, Nancy decreed the president’s movements based on the advice of California astrologer Joan Quigley, whom she consulted frequently by phone.

Afraid for her husband’s stamina, Nancy limited access and monitored appearances. She selected (often astutely) her preferred speechwriters and insisted that the president only be in the public eye when well-rested and at his best. Her instincts—more astute regarding him than herself—while not always appreciated, were often on the right track.

For Nancy, image, not substance, was paramount. If anything went wrong, as inevitably things occasionally did, it was always someone else’s fault, never the president’s or her own. The extent of her influence, Tumulty effectively explains, cannot be ignored or underestimated.

It is fascinating how besotted the Reagans were with one another. The president could not imagine his wife doing or saying anything amiss. Throughout their long marriage, they were romantic, sentimental, publicly demonstrative and hated to be apart. They were so in love, according to Tumulty, there was little love left for their children. They were terrible parents; Ronald, for the most part, was remote and disinterested, Nancy was difficult and provocatively judgmental.

As I read Tumulty’s re-telling and remembered Diana’s show-stopping dance with John Travolta, twirling to a medley from Saturday Night Fever, I recalled that only a few years later, I bemusedly watched my husband, Bob, starry-eyed at his own good fortune, dreamily dancing with Diana at a ball in Toronto.

For years, Nancy made headlines for all the wrong reasons. She was extravagant, spending far too much on clothing and decorating. Memorably, she was pilloried in the media for ordering a huge set of expensive China for the White House during a recession, though it was privately funded. While the president continued to be seen as a man of the people, Nancy was constantly criticized as being out

of touch with everyday Americans.

So, why Nancy, and why now?

As Tumulty reveals, Nancy Davis Reagan—from her childhood insecurities, less-than-stellar (mostly orchestrated by her mother) acting career, personal struggles with anxiety and lifelong dependence on sleeping pills—is, it turns out, a far more complex and interesting person than I, and perhaps others, might ever have imagined.

Also timely is the debate over what constitutes a Republican. Thirty years ago, it was less complicated. Fiercely anticommunist and doggedly opposed to big government, President Reagan proudly declared that “Government is not the solution to our problem. Government is the problem”.

He truly believed (despite their gay friends), that sexual orientation was a lifestyle choice. Nancy, on this issue, was more accepting. Reagan’s traditional Republicanism was grounded in the simplistic, popular, conservative mantra: lower taxes, personal accountability and freedom with a capital F. Today’s debate to define the Party pits Trump, bombast and believers in the cult of personality against proponents of the historic right-wing Republican blueprint.

Perhaps Nancy was ahead of her time, as she cared little about policy or the truth and all about perception. Hollywood studios, Tumulty reminds us, “lubricated by fantasy, manufactured tidbits” about their contracted stars. The term “alternative facts” had not yet been invented but Nancy Reagan would have embraced the concept with gusto.

Her focus, following the Hollywood model, was entirely on the public persona of her husband. She concocted or denied stories as situations warranted. Her own brother, Dick, commented that he often “remembered events differently”.

Feminists called Nancy Reagan “a fifties throwback”. More empathetic writers at the time insisted her strong personality was refreshingly modern.

She once gamely tried to improve her image by dressing in cheap clothing and singing a parody of Second Hand Rose to her (astonished) husband, assembled press and dignitaries at the annual Gridiron Club dinner. She also took up a cause, the “Just Say No” to

drugs campaign. Both maneuvers were successful, despite her dependence on prescriptions and various drug issues involving the Reagan children.

Nancy fiercely controlled the Reagans’ social life, and knew the value of a strategic seating plan (a useful piece of trivia for diplomats and their spouses: hostess and hostile derive from the same root: *hostis*, the Latin for enemy). The Reagan’s parties and state dinners were lavish, legendary and dotted with movie stars. In 1985, they hosted a White House dinner for Prince Charles and Princess Diana, then at the height of her celebrity. Despite objections, Nancy deliberately excluded Vice President George Bush and his wife, Barbara, from the invitation list. The successive First Ladies famously did not get along.

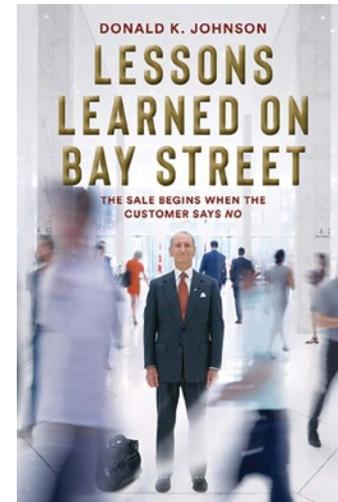
As I read Tumulty’s re-telling and remembered Diana’s show-stopping dance with John Travolta, twirling to a medley from Saturday Night Fever, I recalled that only a few years later, I bemusedly watched my husband, Bob, starry-eyed at his own good fortune, dreamily dancing with Diana at a ball in Toronto.

Tumulty effectively summarizes the main challenges of the Reagan administration, including the AIDS epidemic and the Iran Contra crisis, adding to the history, the extent and nature of Nancy’s involvement. She empathetically describes the couple’s very public transparency as each battled cancer, and later, how consistently and devotedly Nancy cared for the former president through his dementia. Perhaps it is the Nancy of these later years that best encapsulates the triumph of Nancy Reagan.

My only quibble is that Tumulty, like Nancy, refers to the former president as “Ronnie” throughout. It felt too familiar and, frankly, annoying. I found myself substituting “the president” or “Reagan” in my head a lot of the time.

The Triumph of Nancy Reagan is a stimulating and fascinating book, written by a woman who effortlessly combines detailed research with a talent for very readable prose. Tumulty’s triumph is that she convincingly reveals a dynamic, complicated and—if not always likeable—formidable woman. **P**

Arlene Perly Rae is a writer living in New York, where she gazes unwaveringly at her husband, Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations Bob Rae.



A Master Class in Banking and Life

Donald K. Johnson

Lessons Learned on Bay Street
Barlow Books/2021

Review by Paul Deegan

I first met Donald K. Johnson 20 years ago when he was vice-chair of BMO Nesbitt Burns, and I headed government and public relations at BMO. Having read his breezy autobiography, *Lessons Learned on Bay Street*, I now know him even better. For those looking for a masterclass in how to have a successful career in investment banking, Johnson’s book will not disappoint. For those looking for a master class in life, Johnson will delight.

Johnson takes us on an amazing journey from 1963 when he applied for a job at Burns Bros. and Denton to the present day. Johnson had to go through a psychological screening test to determine if he was suitable for the investment business. The test revealed that his desire to be in a sales position was in the top 1 percent—something that would propel an Icelandic kid from Manitoba’s Interlake Region to the top of investment banking.

Early in his career, Johnson learned the value of hard work, networking, and being quick with a joke. More importantly, he learned that the partnership culture was key to a firm's success. To Johnson, it came down to placing the best interests of clients first and keeping partners' interests ahead of personal priorities. How many financial institutions would not have wound up on the ash heap of history if they understood what Johnson knew, even as a young investment banker?

Johnson's career almost came to an end in the mid-1990s. A few months after Bank of Montreal paid \$403 million for Burns Fry, Brian Steck, president of BMO Nesbitt Burns, called Johnson to his office and suggested that Johnson retire. Despite his days being numbered, Johnson continued to work full throttle and he concluded a \$1.1 billion deal for Suncor. Clearly impressed, Steck then decided that it was premature for Johnson to retire. That was a wise call, as Johnson brought in the biggest deal of his career a couple years later with British American Tobacco exchanging its 42 percent interest in Imasco for 100 percent of Imperial Tobacco. BMO earned tens of millions of dollars in advisory fees for the transaction.

One key to Johnson's success has been personal relationships. He

has 6,100 names in his list of contacts and one of those names is Warren Buffett, whom he persuaded to invest in struggling Home Capital. Perhaps an even more important relationship was his friendship with John Whitehead, who was co-chairman of Goldman Sachs. Whitehead shared how he divided his time: one-third for management, one-third for corporate and government clients, and one-third as a volunteer board member for charitable organizations. Whitehead stressed that his volunteer work allowed him to meet senior executives, some of whom became Goldman clients.

This struck a chord with Johnson, whose eyes were so bad that his colleagues nicknamed him 'Boggles' for his Coke-bottle glasses, so he became involved with fundraising for eye research. In 2007, he donated \$5 million, followed up with another \$10 million in 2015, to fund the Donald K. Johnson Eye Institute at Toronto Western Hospital. Johnson's greatest contribution to Canada's charitable sector has been his 25-year advocacy campaign to change our tax laws to encourage more charitable giving. The persistence of his advocacy is based on his three favourite philosophies:

- 1 The sale begins when the customer says no.
- 2 Persistence prevails when all else fails.

3 Never give up. Never give up.
Never, never, never give up!

While the book is largely about his life in business and philanthropic circles, he does pull back the curtain—just a little—on his personal life. He notes that as a father, quality time with the kids meant taking them to the car wash or to his office on weekends. He had a long and happy marriage with his beloved Anna, who died last year. He even shares advice on healthy living—right down to eating Bran Buds and the need for a good night's sleep; Horizontal by Nine is his motto.

Johnson invites the reader into his early years in Lundar. He and his three siblings grew up in a 600 square foot home with no electricity or running water. His mother was adamant that he go to university, so she moved the family to Winnipeg. Her decision changed the trajectory of Johnson's life, and Canada is better for it. I highly recommend this book for anyone looking for an intimate portrayal of a life that, at 85, continues to be very well lived—one that serves as a model for others. **P**

Contributing Writer Paul Deegan, a former executive with BMO Financial Group and later CN Rail, is CEO of Deegan Public Strategies in Toronto.

THE WEEK IN
Policy
ADVERTISER INFORMATION

Everything you need to know from Ottawa, Washington and beyond

Policy Magazine presents *The Week in Policy*, our weekly look at developments in the world of policy and politics in Ottawa, Washington and points beyond. Written by *Policy* Associate Editor and Hill Times columnist Lisa Van Dusen, *The Week in Policy* hits the screens of Canada's political and policy community every Friday afternoon.

ADVERTISING RATES

Banner ads rotate at the top, centre and bottom of *The Week in Policy*. Note that *The Week in Policy* is formatted to work well on desktops, tablets and mobile phones.

CONTACT: L. Ian MacDonald
lianmacdonald@policymagazine.ca or (514) 943-3868

	SIZE	1 MONTH	1 YEAR
Horizontal	728 X 90 px	\$800	\$8,000
Square	300 x 250 px	\$800	\$8,000
Banner	600 x 160 px	\$800	\$8,000

For more information about *The Week in Policy* visit: www.policymagazine.ca

Sustainable food systems Made by great collaborations

Salwa Karboune, Scientific Director of RITA Consortium, a project financed by Quebec's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ), in partnership with the Quebec Food Processing Council (CTAQ) and Quebec's Ministry of Economy and Innovation (MEI)

MADE by McGill



Developing a healthier, more profitable agri-food industry in Canada

How do we optimize Canadian food production in a way that benefits consumers, companies and the environment? Food scientists and agri-food companies are joining forces to tackle this challenge in the RITA Consortium project at McGill University. Together, companies and researchers are taking sustainable packaging and greener production practices from concept to commercialization.

BrucePowerTM



2021

BRUCE POWER PROVIDED 70% OF
THE ENERGY NEEDED TO REPLACE
COAL POWER IN ONTARIO, REDUCING
SMOG DAYS TO ZERO IN 2014.

POWERING
ONTARIO
FORWARD

2005

53 SMOG DAYS

MINING FOR A NEW WORLD



Barrick believes that the best assets managed by the best people will deliver the best returns. Its 13-country portfolio already includes five of the world's 10 largest mines as well as some of its leading copper producers, all with long-term business plans based on declared resources. As for its people, their record speaks for itself: this year, Barrick's returns to shareholders will top its league.

Barrick is also closely aligned to the new demands and expectations of a rapidly changing world. Social responsibility, protection of the environment, partnership with its host communities, care for employees and concern for human rights – the core components of ESG – have long been an integral part of the way it does business. That is why Barrick is not only an industry leader in operational and financial performance but is setting the pace for mining's cultural adjustment to the modern world.

BARRICK
Delivering the future

www.barrick.com | NYSE : GOLD • TSX : ABX