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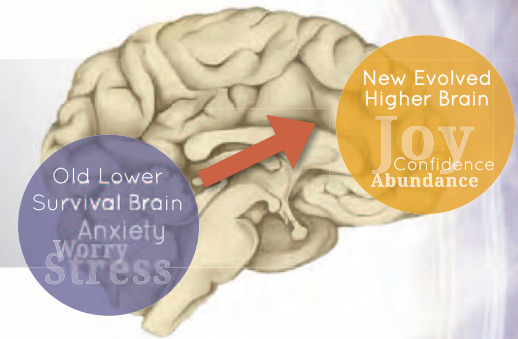
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Rules be damned!

Harper Conservatives bent on deregulation

Since they came to power in 2006, the Harper Conservatives have been on a single-minded mission to rid Canada of rules – rules that protect the environment, ensure public safety, protect workers' rights, support social programs and promote Canadian culture. The name of the game is deregulation and increased power and profits for corporations, but, of course, that objective is never articulated. Instead, the public is fed euphemisms such as “streamlining regulations,” “stimulating the economy,” “facilitating permits,” “cutting red tape,” “improving efficiency” or “updating the process.”

Tax laws: Over the past eight years, the government has slashed corporate income tax to the lowest level among G8 nations while providing additional incentives through lax regulations, loopholes and generous handouts. Contrary



The true culprits are the politicians who have a misguided sense of loyalty... These are the people who are ultimately responsible for the abandoned tar ponds, the train wrecks, the exploitation of workers, the erosion of social programs, the unchecked pollution, and the sell-out of our resources and sovereignty.

to Conservative spin, corporations have not used the extra profit to reinvest and create employment in Canada. Rather, they have accrued enormous wealth, to the point where even the Bank of Canada has reproached them for hoarding hundreds of billions in “dead money.” Is it just coincidence that during this same time Canada’s national debt has ballooned by a whopping 160 billion dollars, a quarter of the total accumulated since confederation? And what portion of this massive debt is due to Harper’s corporate welfare scheme? We may never know, but one thing is certain: average Canadians will be paying for his profligacy for many years to come.

Environmental laws: Nothing, it seems, raises the ire of Conservatives more than laws and institutions that protect the environment. Whether by sabotaging climate talks, firing Parks Canada staff, excluding projects from environmental review or giving the fish farm industry *carte blanche*, Canada has gained a reputation as an environmental outlaw. Using stealth legislation – giant omnibus bills – the Conservatives have stripped away protection from more than 99% of Canada’s lakes and rivers. Worse yet, they have locked in the destruction for decades to come by signing trade agreements that give foreign corporations the right to sue Canada for billions if anyone tries to change the rules of the game.

Perhaps the most telling indicator of who is pulling the strings is a 2011 letter obtained through access to information laws. The letter, from the energy industry to government ministers, requested changes to six specific environmental laws. Within months, the laws in question were gutted, *continued p.6...*

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Photo by Celeste Sloman



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"Gender inequality is one of the most persistent human rights violations of our time. Despite many years of promoting gender equality, inequalities among women/girls and men/boys continue to manifest in egregious ways around the world. The HeForShe campaign is a solidarity movement for gender equality that engages men and boys as advocates and shareholders to break the silence, raise their voices and take action for the achievement of gender equality. Gender equality is not only a women's issue. It is a human rights issue that affects all of us." – *United Nations*
Our cover story this month celebrates Emma Watson in her role as UN Women Goodwill Ambassador and as a fierce advocate for gender equality in honour of International Women's Day.



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HeForShe UN campaign to end gender inequality

an invitation from UN Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson



Emma Watson, UN Women Goodwill Ambassador (centre) greets Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon prior to an event to unveil the HeForShe pilot initiative. Also present is Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women. UN photo.

Last fall, British actor Emma Watson launched the United Nations campaign, HeForShe, a solidarity movement for gender equality that brings together one half of humanity in support of the other half of humanity for the benefit of all. The HeForShe initiative aims to get men and boys to pledge to join the feminist fight for gender equality. As a Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women, Emma Watson gave a smart, important and moving speech about gender inequality and how to fight it. In her speech, Watson made the very important point that, in order for gender equality to be achieved, harmful and destructive stereotypes and expectations about masculinity must change. The full transcript of her speech is below.

Sign on to the UN's HeForShe commitment at www.heforshe.org "Gender equality is not only a women's issue, it is a human rights issue that requires my participation. I commit to take action against all forms of violence and discrimination faced by women and girls."

Today, we are launching a campaign called HeForShe. I am reaching out to you because we need your help. We want to end gender inequality and to do this we need everyone involved. This is the first campaign of its kind at the UN. We want to mobilize as many men and boys as possible to be

advocates for change. And we don't just want to talk about it. We want to try and make sure it's tangible.

I was appointed as Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women six months ago and the more I spoke about feminism, the more I realized that fighting for women's rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating. If there is one thing I know for certain, it is that this has to stop.

For the record, feminism by definition is the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is the theory of political, economic and social equality of the sexes.

I started questioning gender-based assumptions a long time ago. When I was eight, I was confused [about] being called bossy because I wanted to direct the plays we would put on for our parents – but the boys were not; at 14, I started to be sexualized by certain elements of the media; at 15, my girlfriends started dropping out of sports teams because they didn't want to appear muscly; at 18, my male friends were unable to express their feelings.

I decided I was a feminist and this seemed uncomplicated to me. But my recent research has shown me feminism has become an unpopular word. Women are choosing not to identify as feminists. Apparently, I'm among the ranks of women whose expressions are



This is the first campaign of its kind at the UN. We want to try to mobilize as many men and boys as possible to be advocates for change. And we don't just want to talk about it. We want to try and make sure it's tangible...

I invite you to step forward, to be seen and to ask yourself, "If not me, who? If not now, when?"

seen as too strong, too aggressive, isolating and anti-men. Unattractive, even.

Why has the word become such an uncomfortable one? I am from Britain and I think it is right I am paid the same as my male counterparts. I think it is right that I should be able to make decisions about my own body. I think it is right that women be involved on my behalf in the policies and decisions that will affect my life. I think it is right that socially I am afforded the same respect as men.

But, sadly, I can say there is no one country in the world where all women can expect to see these rights. No country in the world can yet say they have achieved gender equality. These rights, I consider to be human rights, but I am one of the lucky ones.

My life is a sheer privilege because my parents didn't love me less because I was born a daughter. My school did not limit me because I was a girl. My mentors didn't assume I would go less far because I might give birth to a child one day. These influences were the 'gender equality ambassadors' that made me who I am today. They may not know it, but they are the inadvertent feminists that are changing the world today. We need more of those.

And if you still hate the word, it is not the word that is important. It's the idea and the ambition *continued p.7...*

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...Rules from p.3

raising the question of who writes Canadian law – elected representatives or corporate interests working behind the scenes?

Science: Since science is often the basis for legislation – legislation that could impose extra costs and restrictions on industry – why not just get rid of science? And this is exactly what the Conservatives have done by muzzling government scientists, firing those who study the environment, defunding research projects that monitor pollution and suppressing scientific reports. The most remarkable example of Conservative contempt for science must surely be the shuttering of fisheries libraries and the physical destruction of decades of research data. How can this type of book burning happen in a modern, democratic nation such as Canada?

The assault on Statistics Canada is another attempt to suppress knowledge. In 2010, the Conservatives abolished the mandatory long-form census despite warnings from top statisticians that data from the voluntary version would be useless. With the demise of the long-form census, governments across Canada lost a valuable tool for making sound policy decisions.

Privatization: The legislation that underpins social services is also under attack. By sabotaging the Health Care Accord, undermining the Canada Health Act and manipulating the funding formula, Harper will leave the provinces little choice but to let the corporate sector assume more responsibility for health care delivery. Costs will rise and the commitment to universality will wane as Canada adopts a for-profit health care system like that in the United States.

Even Canadian culture has not been spared the corporate axe. Harper has used budget cuts, patronage appointments and assaults on the Broadcasting Act to bring the CBC to its knees. Prominent Conservatives are now suggesting the public broadcaster be abolished altogether and that private media outlets be given the responsibility of airing Canadian content.

Public safety: The consequences of deregulation were driven home in 2008 with the tainted meat scandal that cost 20 people their lives. Investigations showed that, prior to the listeriosis outbreak, Canada's food safety agency had dropped the rule requiring meat processors to inform the agency about positive bacteria results. The change came as part of a government decision to allow companies to develop their own food safety programs.

More recently, there was the horrific Lac Mégantic rail disaster that claimed the lives of 47 people. The report into that incident slammed the rail company for poor safety practices, but also cited Transport Canada for ineffective auditing of the company's safety plans, insufficient oversight and a lack of follow-up on recurring safety problems. The accident occurred after significant budget cuts to Transport Canada and warnings that rail companies cannot be trusted to regulate themselves.

Who's in charge?

Corporations are not evil, but, just as when swimming in shark-infested waters, it pays to know whom you are dealing with. Corporations do everything they can to maximize profit and bring the best returns for their shareholders – period. They do not like to pay taxes or spend a lot of money meeting environmental and safety standards. Invariably, they choose short-term gains over long-term sustainable development. They are acutely aware of politicians who are sympathetic to their cause and will donate vast sums to get their puppet leaders elected.

The true culprits are the politicians who have a misguided sense of loyalty – those who are elected to represent the people, but actually do everything they can to advance the corporate agenda, especially through deregulation. These are the people who are ultimately responsible for the abandoned tar ponds, the train wrecks, the exploitation of workers, the erosion of social programs, the unchecked pollution, and the sell-out of our resources and sovereignty.

We have a right to live in a safe and healthy environment and to build a just and compassionate society. Corporations have a role to play, but they should be forced to operate on our terms, not the other way round. For that to happen, we need rules that serve the public interest and those rules have to be respected and strictly enforced. Simply put, we need a new vision for Canada. ■

Frants Attorp is a writer who lives on Salt Spring Island.

behind it because not all women have received the same rights I have. In fact, statistically, very few have.

In 1997, Hillary Clinton made a famous speech in Beijing about women's rights. Sadly, many of the things she wanted to change are still true today. But what stood out for me the most was that less than 30% of the audience was male. How can we affect change in the world when only half of it is invited or feel welcome to participate in the conversation?

Men, I would like to take this opportunity to extend your formal invitation. Gender equality is your issue too. Because, to date, I've seen my father's role as a parent being valued less by society, despite my need of his presence as a child as much as my mother's. I've seen young men suffering from mental illness, unable to ask for help for fear it would make them less of a man. In fact, in the UK, suicide is the biggest killer of men between 20 and 49, eclipsing road accidents, cancer and coronary heart disease. I've seen men made fragile and insecure by a distorted sense of what constitutes male success. Men don't have the benefits of equality, either.

We don't often talk about men being imprisoned by gender stereotypes, but I can see that they are and when they are free, things will change for women as a natural consequence. If men don't have to be aggressive in order to be accepted, women won't feel compelled to be submissive. If men don't have to control, women won't have to be controlled.

Both men and women should feel free to be sensitive. Both men and women should feel free to be strong. It is time we all perceive gender on a spectrum, instead of two sets of opposing ideals. If we stop defining each other by what we are not and start defining ourselves by who we are, we can all be freer and this is what HeForShe is about. It's about freedom.

I want men to take up this mantle so their daughters, sisters and mothers can be free from prejudice, but also so their sons have permission to be vulnerable and human too – to reclaim those parts of themselves they abandoned and in doing so to be a more true and complete version of themselves.


You might be thinking, "Who is this *Harry Potter* girl and what is she doing speaking at the UN?" And it's a really good question. I've been asking myself the same thing.

All I know is that I care about this problem and I want to make it better. And having seen what I've seen, given the chance, I feel it is my responsibility to say something.

Statesman Edmund Burke said, "All that is needed for the forces of evil to triumph is for good men and women to do nothing."

In my nervousness for this speech and in my moments of doubt, I told myself firmly, "If not me, who? If not now, when?" If you have similar doubts when opportunities are presented to you, I hope those words will be helpful. Because the reality is that if we do nothing, it will take 75 years – or for me to be nearly 100 – before women can expect to be paid the same as men for the same work; 15.5 million girls will be married in the next 16 years as children. And at current rates, it won't be until 2086 that all rural African girls can have a secondary education.

If you believe in equality, you might be one of those inadvertent feminists I spoke of earlier and for this, I applaud you. We are struggling for a uniting word, but the good news is we have a uniting movement. It is called HeForShe. I invite you to step forward, to be seen and to ask yourself, "If not me, who? If not now, when?"

Thank you very, very much. 



Emma Watson made her first appearance as Hermione Granger in the *Harry Potter* series at 11 years of age.

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GMO BITES

US secretly approved the first GE tree

In January, groups from around the world joined together to denounce the US government for allowing the first genetically engineered tree, a loblolly pine, to be legalized with no government or public oversight, with no assessment of their risks to the public or the environment and with no regard for the overwhelming public opposition to GE trees.

“Approvals of genetically engineered trees just over our border could put Canada’s forest ecosystems at risk,” said Lucy Sharratt of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN). “The loblolly pine is grown in the US southeast but what forest trees could the US government approve next? The Canadian government needs to look into the possible contamination risks from GE tree experiments and approvals in the US and field trials in our own backyard.”

A secret letter from the USDA to GE tree company ArborGen dated last August was exposed by scientist Doug Gurian-Sherman of the Center for Food Safety. In this letter, the USDA made the unprecedented decision to allow ArborGen to pursue unregulated commercial cultivation of a loblolly pine genetically engineered for altered wood composition. These trees could be planted anywhere in the US, without public knowledge or access to information about them.

Gurian-Sherman argued the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) “is deliberately thumbing its nose at the public” with this decision, pointing out this is probably the biggest environmental regulatory change in the US since the early 1990s. Loblolly pines are native across 14 states throughout the southeast US and are grown in plantations around the world. Their pollen is known to travel for hundreds of miles.

“If these GE loblolly pines are released on a large scale in the US, there will be no way to stop them from cross-contaminating native loblolly pines,” said biologist Dr. Rachel Smolker of Biofuelwatch. “This is deliberate, irreversible and completely irresponsible contamination of the environment with unknown and possibly devastating consequences. Forest ecosystems are barely understood and the introduction of trees with genes for modified wood characteristics could have all manner of negative impacts on soils, fungi, insects, wildlife, songbirds and public health. And all this for short term commercial profit.”

Many are also worried about the international implications of this USDA decision. Winnie Overbeek, international coordinator of the Uruguay-based World Rainforest Movement stated, “We are greatly concerned that these unregulated GE pines could be shipped to Brazil or other countries... further promoting the expansion of indus-



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trial tree plantations in the global south. This contributes to deforestation and affects indigenous and peasant communities worldwide who depend on forests for survival.”

Global Justice Ecology Project’s Ruddy Turnstone from Florida remarked, “ArborGen and the government may think they have won this round, but there is already a huge anti-GMO movement... A great many of them will take action to ensure these trees are never planted.”

In 2013, when the USDA called for public comments on another ArborGen request to commercialize a GE Eucalyptus tree (a decision still pending), they received comments at the rate of 10,000 to one opposing the industry request. By simply refusing to regulate this new GE pine, the USDA has cut the public out of the process completely.


The Campaign to STOP GE Trees is an international alliance of organizations, including the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), mobilized to protect forests and biodiversity and to support communities threatened by the dangerous release of genetically engineered trees into the environment. www.stopgetrees.org From *cban.ca*

The problem with the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

In an excellent video, John Hilary, executive director of War on Want (www.waronwant.org) explains what’s wrong with the TTIP: It has nothing to do with “free trade.” It’s all about deregulation of controversial and risky products like GMOs, tobacco and hormone-treated meat. It won’t boost our economies. Politicians know that much of what we’re being told about the supposed benefits of TTIP is a lie.

If TTIP is adopted, a million jobs in the US and EU combined will be lost. Europe will lose exports. Food safety rules, labour rights and the European social model will be trashed. Corporations will be able to sue national and regional governments (i.e. the taxpayer) in secret courts for daring to regulate their products.

2015 will be a critical year in the GMO battle, with Europe vulnerable to increased GMO cultivation, Asia and Africa coming under growing pressure to open up their farming systems to GM, Monsanto continuing to sow misery in Latin America and ongoing legal and ballot measures aimed at restricting or labelling GMOs in North America.

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Eating & driving planet aids

As spring buds appear, we might be looking at our lifestyle choices and considering new steps. Taking action gives a sense of empowerment and two effective and powerful actions we can take immediately to limit our impact on climate change are:

1. Adopt a plant-based diet or shift in that direction.
2. Choose an electric car or plug-in hybrid over a gas-fuelled car. See JM Toriel's article in *Common Ground* (January 2015), <http://commonground.ca/2015/01/great-shift-forward/>

In 2010, the United Nations' Environmental Program's International Panel of Sustainable Resource Management stated, "A global shift towards a vegan diet is critical for mitigating global hunger and the worst impacts of climate change." And the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has concluded that animal agriculture's impact on greenhouse gas emissions is "one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global."


Methane gas from the digestive process of livestock is 25 to 100 times more destructive than CO2 from vehicles.

Animal agriculture causes three times as much greenhouse gas emissions as cars, trucks, trains, boats and planes *combined*. Seems impossible, but methane gas from the digestive process of livestock is 25 to 100 times more destructive than CO2 from vehicles. Livestock is also the leading cause of environmental degradation.

One might expect such information to be prominent on the websites of environmental organizations such as www.350.org, www.greenpeace.org, www.sierraclub.org, www.climatereality.ca, Rainforest Action Network (www.ran.org) and www.amazonwatch.org. If you search their sites hard enough, you can occasionally find minor, brief suggestions about limiting animal agriculture. But why is the topic not addressed in greater depth? The documentary *Cowspiracy* (www.cowspiracy.com), directed by Kip Andersen and Keegan Kuhn, explores answers to this question.

In the film, Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, says, "I think they consider it [a veg. diet] to be a political loser. They're membership organizations. They're looking to maximize the number of people making contributions and if they get identified as being anti-meat or challenging people on their everyday habits – something that is so dear to people – it will hurt their fund raising."

Demosthenes Maratos of the Sustainability Institute at Molloy College in New York State says, "If you're listening to the majority of the environmental organizations, they are not telling you to do much. Live your life the way you've been living it: change a light bulb from time to time, drive less, use less plastic, recycle more. It's better for their fund raising and better for their profile to create a victim and perpetrator sort of plot line."

Instead of keeping ourselves in the victim role, we can reclaim our sense of personal power by doing something, rather than assuming someone else runs the whole show. One step toward sustainable food choices is to avoid or limit consumption of animal products. Choose plant-based meals when dining out (see www.happycow.net for great restaurant choices in your area). Going 100% vegan may seem like a huge leap so start where you are and take small steps – or a giant leap. There is great food awaiting you. 

Vesanto Melina is a BC dietitian and award-winning author. www.becomingvegan.ca, www.nutrispeak.com Email vesanto.melina@gmail.com.

April 15: See Vesanto at Choices Market in South Surrey, 8:30 PM.

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Raising a stink over getting Pinked

Will “Boob Bombing” really prevent breast cancer?

Rarely, if ever, has a disease colonized a colour, but that’s precisely what you can say about the corporate fundraising behemoth around breast cancer. It’s audacious, sometimes crass and very hard to miss. And did I say, it’s very, very pink?

The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation’s Get Pink Campaign kicks things off on March 12, urging you to “recruit your co-workers or classmates to join your Get Pink’d! team...” You could go one step further and “Shop for the Cure,” choosing from 35 corporate or community partners to spend money or to raise money for the cause. Or you could send a “Boob Bomb,” touted as “a fun and cheeky way to help remind your friends that they should check their breasts regularly.” While you’re at it, download the free Don’t Forget to Check app so you can learn how your breasts look and feel.

Ok, go ahead, call me a curmudgeon, but is all this saucy pinkification of our lives and all the touchy feely – literally speaking – stuff about breasts likely to make any difference?

I can understand how people get infected with the urge to jump aboard the breast cancer bandwagon. Those who’ve had a close brush with breast cancer or

lost a loved one to the disease are likely to find great comfort in a likeminded community that somehow wants to contribute back.

The foundation’s Don’t Forget to Check program sounds benign and fun, but like many aspects of breast cancer advocacy, there is the obvious gap between the research around what they’re promoting and the marketing hype. One message – that women should carry out routine breast self examinations – is the opposite of what you hear from evidence-based sources, such as the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), which says breast self-examination shouldn’t be done – probably because there is no evidence it helps and may even cause harm.

In the two trials where it’s been studied, it led to more imaging procedures and biopsies than for control patients without changing the length or quality of those women’s lives. You should definitely talk to your doctor about any suspicious changes to your breasts, but the push to carry out routine breast self examination is not endorsed by the World Health Organization, the American Academy of Family Physicians or the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care (CTFPHC).

As for full-blown mammography, there is also a con-

trast between the advocates and the cautious experts. Those who review screening as part of Canada’s Task Force on Preventive Health Care don’t recommend that women start mammography in their 40’s, but recommend doing it every two to three years starting at age 50. The USPSTF agrees with this and says women should only do it every two years until age 74. By contrast, the American Cancer Society says women should be getting a mammogram every year starting at 40, “continuing as long as a woman is in good health.” The American College of Radiology has the most zealous pro-screening position, claiming, “By not getting annual mammograms starting at age 40, you increase your chances of dying from breast cancer and the likelihood that you will experience more extensive treatment for any cancers found.” (See mammographysaveslives.org)

So who is right? Why do some groups recommend having mammograms twice as often as another group? Does this have anything to do with the science-based orientation of some groups (like the USPSTF or the CTFPHC) versus the advocacy, fundraising and professional goals of other groups?

I agree there are legitimate differences of opinion around breast cancer screening because of the problems

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of overdiagnosis. Any screening involves false positive and false negative findings, unnecessary biopsies, surgeries and radiation, all of which are capable of inflicting psychological and physical harm. All the pink you see this time of year tends to camouflage the fierce debates within medical circles around how frequently breast cancers are overtreated.

One of the world's major breast screening researchers, Danish physician Peter Gotzsche said, "Healthy women are getting unnecessary diagnoses of pre-cancerous conditions that are unlikely to develop during their lifetime." This sentiment is echoed by Dr. Gilbert Welch, author of *Overdiagnosed*, who wrote that, in the US alone, "Seventy thousand women a year are overdiagnosed and treated unnecessarily for breast cancer." How common is overdiagnosis in breast cancer screening?

One meta-analysis – a study of many large studies – of breast cancer screening was summarized by the Public Health Agency of Canada in an excellent online guide. It says if you gave mammograms to 1,000 women aged 40 years and older every year for 10 years, here's what you'd find: 1) 981 women will not have breast cancer. 2) 451 women will have normal results every year. 3) 549 women will be told they have an abnormal result at some point during the 10 years. 4) 533 of the abnormal results will be false alarms, which turn out to be normal after further testing.

Encouraging more and more women into the mammography juggernaut should have us all seeing not pink, but red.

After a decade of annual mammograms, this means 97% of the women who are told they have an abnormality on a mammogram do not have breast cancer. Furthermore, of those 1,000 screened women: 1) 16 women will have their breast cancer diagnosed through a screening test. 2) Three women will develop breast cancer that is diagnosed and treated without screening. 3) One death from breast cancer will be prevented. 4) 12 women will die from some cause other than breast cancer. 5) Two women will die of breast cancer despite breast cancer screening.

The "mammography saves lives" rhetoric that underlies the pink fundraising activities is only true for the one in 1,000 women who is screened every year for a decade. Independent groups, such as the USPSTF, are more restrictive in their assessment of screening because they are only interested in assessing screening on its medical value. Other countries recommend women not start screening till age 50 and some have even severely curtailed it. Some experts in Switzerland, widely considered to have one of the best healthcare systems in the world, have suggested that mammography be banned in that country.

Thankfully, there is a tide flowing in the other direction from all the pink surrounding us this time of year. The 2012 film, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*, is a powerful documentary, calling breast cancer "the poster child of corporate cause-related marketing campaigns."

The activists at the US group Breast Cancer Action (BCAction.org) based in San Francisco is not financially tied to the breast cancer industry and they deconstruct it at every opportunity. Their Think Before You Pink campaign asks if we should really allow companies to "pinkwash" themselves, i.e.: wrapping themselves in the feel-good vibe of pink ribbons and pink marketing while they sell products containing chemicals linked to breast cancer? Anyone up for a big ole pink bucket of fried chicken?

What would make me trust the fundraising campaigns run by groups like the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation? To start, I would need it to come clean about the facts around preventing breast cancer and that means some unvarnished facts about the downsides of mammography. As much as we might like to wear pink sunglasses and have fun with this disease, the harm and unnecessary treatment caused by encouraging more and more women into the mammography juggernaut should have us all seeing not pink, but red. [K](#)

Alan Cassels wrote *Seeking Sickness: Medical Screening and the Misguided Hunt for Disease* where he discussed, among other things, mammography.

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Your liver the inner alchemist



burdock photo © Keena2009

by Terry Willard

Your liver is one of the most exciting organs in your entire body. It is responsible for more functions than almost any other organ in your body and the fact that the root of the word “liver” is the word “live” in many languages should open our eyes to clues.

So why do we take it for granted? Well, for the most part, it simply carries along doing its job in its deeply hidden alchemical laboratory, turning raw bulk material into the golden nectars that run our body. It processes virtually everything we eat, drink, breathe in or rub on our skin and that’s only a few of its 500+ functions that are vital to life. Bottom line: we can’t live without a liver.

I like to consider the liver as a great

Burdock root is one of several herbs that promote healthy liver function.

alchemical factory with a very sophisticated shipping/receiving system. It is the centre of most of the body’s metabolic function, receiving the bulk of the ‘raw’ material we ingest. The liver detoxifies much of what comes into our body and ships off the many nutrients it tweaks for the requirements of the rest of our body. It helps provide us with energy, fights off infection, regulates hormones and helps our blood clot while continuously cleansing our body of toxins. As an alchemist, it likes to keep a clean laboratory.

I could go on and on citing the list of its daily functions, but suffice it to say it contributes much to the alchemy of the physical body. Energetically, it also reflects several emotions; anger, jealousy, envy and competition are the most prominent ones. This is a two-way street:

a weakened liver increases the tendency towards these emotions and increased levels of these emotions weaken the liver, which creates a negative, downward spiral that feeds on itself.

How can you keep your inner alchemist happy? It comes down to the same basic tenets of natural healing: eat right, drink good, clean water, cleanse regularly, reduce negative emotions, breathe clean air and exercise moderately. Of course, in modern daily life – especially in large cities – this is not always possible to keep in balance so we often need help.

We can’t always maintain a perfect diet, but the good news is we don’t have to because what we eat on special occasions doesn’t matter as much as what we eat on a daily basis. Most of my patients eat a good diet on a regular basis and eat ‘festival’ foods only on special occasions like religious or ethnic holidays and birthdays. A patient once told me the hardest thing to do was to find 365 friends that had birthdays on different days, but that misses the point somewhat. The idea is to have a festival feast only once a month or so. Of course, you can always fall back on a cleanse after an extended festival period, but one should do two to four cleanses a year anyway.

Anytime is a good time to cleanse, but the best time is in the spring. From an Oriental energetic point of view, the spring rules the liver so you are assisting it a bit more in the spring than any other time of the year. There are many good cleanses on the market to help with both dietary suggestions and tried and true herbal formulas for cleansing the liver and the rest of the body. As an alternative, you can simply have a subtle, low acid-forming diet and drink a couple of cups of dandelion root tea two times a day for two to four weeks. A number of dietary restrictions will apply, including: no flour products (cakes, cookies, breads, pasta etc.); no dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt – butter is OK); no tropical fruits, dried fruits, sweets, processed foods or preservatives.

It is interesting to note that most of

the great herbs for cleansing the liver are herbs that clean up the manure around the barn. Does this suggest anything to you? Some of our favourite herbs for this area are dandelion root, black radish root and burdock roots.

Dandelion is a slow, but excellent, liver cleanser. It is not used for fast dramatic liver action, but as a constant, slow cleanser. Drinking a cup of dandelion ‘coffee’ once or twice a day for one to 12 months can do wonders for the liver. It will also tone up the hepatic structure, remove liver ‘stagnation,’ improve digestion, decongest the portal system and remove problems resulting from ‘heat’ rising to the skin. In Chinese medicine, it is considered one of the best remedies for reducing ‘liver fire’ and ‘fire poison’ (abscesses, boils, sores, etc.).

Black radish reduces bilirubin in the body and thus relieves liver stress. It has been widely used for hepatic drainage and for liver related headaches.

Burdock root cleanses the liver and reduces the amount of toxins in the body.

Milk thistle: Most people immediately think of milk thistle when they want to cleanse the liver, but it is not really that effective. Don’t get me wrong; it is a great liver herb, but not the best one to use during a cleanse. Think of milk thistle as more of a liver protector and rejuvenator than a cleanser. It is best to use it during your festival eating times to protect the liver and after the cleansing phase to rejuvenate the liver.

Keeping the liver clean and rejuvenated can help you have a smoother and more energetic life. A little maintenance a couple of times a year – especially in the spring – can do wonders. Since you live a lot of your life through the alchemy of the liver, keep it running at a nice, calm metabolic purr. ◀

Terry Willard, Cl.H., Ph.D. is recognized as one of North America’s leading clinical herbalists. For over 40 years, he has been an active practitioner and the teacher/director of the Wild Rose College of Natural Healing. www.DrTerryWillard.com and www.wrc.net

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Healthy love relationships

I want to be in a relationship where you telling me you love me is just a ceremonial validation of what you already show me. – Steve Maraboli

We have always heard the Inuit have at least 50 different words for “snow.” We really need at least that many words for love because it is hard to understand what someone means, specifically, when there is only one word for love.

There is love for one’s favourite food, car, colour, family members and pets. There is spiritual love, love for one’s religion, romantic and sexual love, idealized love and needy love. The list could be endless.

And what is meant by the term “unconditional love?” There is no one meaning. It can mean “I love you no matter what” or “I love you just as you are.” When it comes to our children, unconditional love is so important. They need to know we love them even if they are not perfect and that we will not withhold our love if they are not exactly how we wish them to be. We do not make them responsible for our emotional wellbeing.

In mature, healthy, unconditional love, love is more than a feeling; it is an on-going action.

When it comes to romantic love, I prefer to talk in terms of mature, healthy love and immature, unhealthy love. In mature love, there absolutely are conditions, but they are healthy adult conditions. For mature love to survive and thrive, essential human needs must be met, including trust, companionship, communication, appreciation and respect. Love cannot remain grounded if these are compromised by lies, neglect, rudeness, secrets, criticism or stubbornness.

If we do not have appropriate boundaries, conditions are set for abuse, co-dependency and loss of the ability to express or be one’s authentic self. We need to have enough self-respect to set limits and our partner needs to respect us enough to honour them.

When the basic conditions for healthy love are in place, the couple can love each other within those boundaries. Notice these conditions do not include being responsible for the other’s happiness, meeting all of a partner’s emotional needs, always doing things our way or controlling each other.

In mature, healthy, unconditional love, love is more than a feeling; it is an on-going action. We are loving toward our partner – not to get our needs met, but because it comes from a generosity of heart. Our partner’s happiness and wellbeing are as important as our own. We work as a team to resolve issues, not as competitors in battle. Notwithstanding major threats to the basic conditions of the relationship, we choose not to judge our partner. We let little things go and focus on all that is good in our partner. We do not carry anger and resentment or hold grudges once we have processed the issue and agreed to move on.

We probably all enter into relationships with all kinds of conscious and unconscious expectations. It is common to think if our partner really loved us, he/she would meet all of those expectations. This is unhealthy, conditional love.

For healthy relationships, we must first be emotionally healthy ourselves. We need to establish a strong, loving relationship with ourselves and validate and emotionally comfort ourselves when needed. Our partner should be one with whom we share a healthy journey: two emotionally mature individuals enjoying life and growth together. **K**

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, “Deep Powerful Change” hypnosis CDs and “Creating Effective Relationships” series, visit www.gwen.ca

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Home radon test could be a lifesaver

In late January, the BC Lung Association released results of Canada's largest-ever, community-wide home radon testing project, conducted in Castlegar and Prince George, two of BC's radon hot spots. In more than half the Castlegar homes tested, and one-third in Prince George, radon concentrations exceeded Health Canada's exposure guideline.

Radon is a radioactive gas formed by the natural decay of uranium in soil and rock. It can seep into buildings through foundation cracks and other openings. Without proper ventilation, radon concentrations in indoor air can reach dangerous levels.

You can't see, smell or taste it so it's easy to ignore. But radon exposure is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, responsible for 16% of lung cancer deaths in Canada. According to the BC Lung Association, a person exposed to high levels of radon has a one in 20 lifetime chance of developing lung cancer. Smokers face increased risks, with a one in three lifetime chance of developing lung cancer if they're also exposed to high radon levels.

The good news is that in most cases it's fairly easy to lower indoor radon concentrations. Certified professionals can help identify how radon is entering the building, seal cracks and install specialized venting. This typically costs between \$500 and \$3,000. (A number of organizations, including the David Suzuki Foundation, have recommended a tax credit to make radon mitigation more affordable.)

As BC Lung Association CEO Scott McDonald said recently, "The problem is too few British Columbians know what radon is, where it comes from and how to fix a problem in your home if you have one."

I'm one of the many British Columbians – and Canadians – who hadn't thought about testing radon levels in my house. But it's never too late and I'm starting a test

now. I'll keep you posted.

There are two ways to test indoor radon concentrations. You can buy a one-time test kit for \$25 to \$30 from many hardware stores or businesses specializing in radon detection and mitigation, or online from the BC Lung Association. Some certified radon professionals also sell electronic continuous radon monitors, which show weekly and monthly average concentrations on a digital display.

Indoor radon levels can vary wildly from day to day or even hour to hour, as well as seasonally. Concentrations are generally higher in winter and at night, when windows and doors are closed. Health Canada recommends running a radon test over a minimum of three months, during fall or winter.

While some areas, like Castlegar and Prince George, are prone to high concentrations of indoor radon, Health Canada emphasizes that no areas of the country are radon-free. A 2012 Health Canada study indicates that 6.9% of Canadians live in homes with radon levels above the guideline. Even if your home tests below Health Canada's guideline level, you might want to explore mitigation options. If you're like me and have put off taking action on radon, start with a test. If the test shows you need to mitigate, find a certified radon professional near you at <http://cnrpp.ca/>

Governments should also test radon levels in public buildings, like schools and hospitals, as recommended in the David Suzuki Foundation's 2007 report, "Radon: The Unfamiliar Killer."

For more information, visit takeactiononradon.ca or radonaware.ca

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation senior researcher and analyst Lisa Gue. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

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Clean Tech soars with Solar Impulse

by Bruce Mason



trol centre. Nicknamed “guardian angel,” it will house a small army of handpicked specialists in air traffic control, meteorology, math and engineering. In constant contact via satellite, it will monitor the sun, batteries and the best routes. Some of the finest minds and most famous names on the planet – Richard Branson, James Cameron, Paulo Coelho – will be among those watching, mesmerized, with fingers crossed.

Piccard, a doctor, psychiatrist, explorer and aeronaut, made the first non-stop round-the-world balloon flight, following in the tradition and footsteps of his family, who have utilized science to explore the stratosphere and the depths of the ocean. The key to his powerful message and current mission: “Adventure is not

necessarily a spectacular deed, but rather an ‘extra-ordinary’ one, meaning something that pushes us outside our normal way of thinking and behaving. Something that forces us to leave the protective shell of our certainties, within which we act and react automatically.

“Adventure is a state of mind in the face of the unknown, a way of conceiving our existence as an experimental field, in which we have to develop our inner resources, climb our personal path of evolution and assimilate the ethical and moral values that we need to accompany our voyage.”

The crew will travel for days at a time, in an unheated, unpressurized cockpit, rivalling Lindbergh’s 1927 Trans-Atlantic trip in simplicity and significance. Their list of epic Solar Impulse adventures is already highlighted by solar flights across the Mediterranean and the US.

Piccard’s co-pilots include co-founder and engineer Andre Borschberg. Their re-designed and rigorously tested second solar plane is wider than a Boeing 747 (72m/236 feet), but weighs only 2,300 kilograms/5,000 pounds; the tops of the wings are covered with 17,000 solar cells, which drive four brush-less electric motors at speeds of up to 140km/hr. /90mph. A 633-kilogram/2,077-pound lithium battery keeps the plane’s propellers turning through the night. The only hitch preventing non-stop flight is the crew, which need to restock supplies and drop off waste materials. Autonomous solar-powered drones can stay aloft for weeks.

The flight will launch from Abu Dhabi by early March, stopping in 12 locations, including Chongqing, New York City and Southern Europe. Covering approximately 35,000 kilometres at speeds between 50 and 100km/hr., humankind’s first global solar flight is expected to be complete in 25 flight days, spread over five months, returning by late July or early August.

The feat is inspiring international imaginations, in advance of last-ditch, year-end, climate change talks in Paris. That’s if everything goes accord- *continued p.22...*

The Solar Impulse is the first intercontinental flight in a piloted, solar-powered aircraft, travelling the greatest distance at the highest altitude. *Copyright Solar Impulse.* Inset: Andre Borschberg and Bertrand Piccard.

As you read this, one of the greatest adventures in the 21st century, if not in human history, is unfolding: a flight around the world, powered only by the sun. The objective is to attract the world and focus attention on preserving our planet and sustaining and improving our quality of life. It is intended to motivate global society – you and I – to tackle challenges by utilizing clean technologies.

If that doesn’t excite you, let’s put it in another scale and perspective: the carbon-fibre Solar Impulse 2 aircraft weighs less than a typical, ubiquitous SUV automobile yet it has a wingspan wider than the largest passenger plane. And it is well on its way to realizing its/our potential: flying perpetually, without any fuel or pollution.

This is not pie-in-the-sky stuff. It’s the revolutionary vision of Bertrand Piccard, who says, “This is absolutely unique. For the first time in history, we have an aeroplane that is flying with no fuel, day and night, demonstrating the incredible potential of clean technologies to reduce dependency on fossil fuel and to act on climate change.”

If you are rolling your eyes, keep them skyward and consider this: at 12 years in the making – including feasibility studies, design and construction – the Solar Impulse has simulated thousands of flights and set eight world records – ironically, three at night – including the longest manned, solar-powered flight at 26 hours. They are now attempting the first interconti-

ental flight in a piloted, solar-powered aircraft, travelling the greatest distance at the highest altitude.

These unprecedented demonstrations of how pioneering spirit, innovation and clean technologies can change the world have found immediate resonance with folks who get it. The list includes high-powered business partners such as the watch brand, Omega;

For the first time in history, we have an aeroplane that is flying with no fuel, day and night, demonstrating the incredible potential of clean technologies to reduce dependency on fossil fuel and to act on climate change. – Bertrand Piccard

German chemical giant, Solvay; international elevator and escalator provider, Schindler; and renewable and energy efficiency innovator, Abb. Other advocates include Altran, Google, Swiss Re Corporate Solutions, Swisscom, Moët Hennessy and host partner Masdar, Abu Dhabi’s renewable energy company, which is installing millions of power-producing mirrors while slashing oil production.

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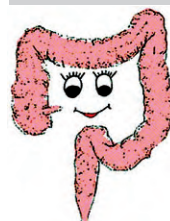
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I think the environment should be put in the category of our national security. Defense of our resources is just as important as defense abroad. Otherwise what is there to defend?

- Robert Redford



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...*Solar Impulse* from p.18

ing to Solar Impulse's plans, hopes and dreams. Corporate mainstream media will likely inform us only if something goes wrong, but you can follow Solar Impulse 2 at <http://www.solarimpulse.com/>

Piccard hopes to "encourage each and every one of us to become pioneers in our own lives, in our ways of thinking and behaving... Major challenges await humanity," he says. "They will open new horizons for science, but their objectives will be less to conquer unknown territories than to preserve the planet from today's threats. The next adventures will therefore be humanitarian and medical (combating extreme poverty and containing new epidemics), political (improving our governance of the planet), spiritual (rediscovering profound and soundly-based values) and, of course, technological (providing durable answers to the threats

menacing our environment.)"
Bon voyage to us all!

Hundreds of keen and curious folks interacted with 38 innovative companies at Surrey's City Hall, for the first-ever local Clean Tech Expo, featuring everything from home energy efficiency, creative alternatives, existing transportation, wind power sources and high toxicity solvents.

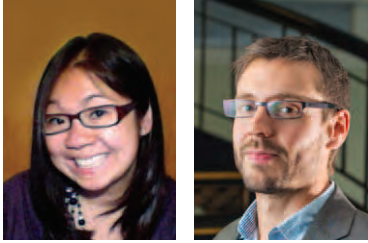
Thirty-eight companies vied for the championship in the inaugural Greater Vancouver Clean Technology Championship in late January, in hopes of winning the \$10,000 Vancity prize and a trophy designed by KPU's School of Design. (See more at: <http://www.surrey.ca/citygovernment/16470.aspx#sthash.J1qTNjAp.dpuf>)

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Solaris Geothermal, FLO Innovations, Adroit Technologies, Dew Point Technologies, and MegaHertz Power Systems were among the other finalists. In future articles, *Common Ground* will feature their work and others acting on climate change.

Got clean technology? Get in touch and email bruce-mason@shaw.ca.



How small towns are driving Canada's digital future

“If you want it done right, you have to do it yourself” and when it comes to Internet access, communities across Canada are doing just that. Through municipal broadband networks operated by local governments, public utilities, cooperatives, non-profits and public-private partnerships, Canadian cities and towns are galvanizing Canada's otherwise lacklustre digital policy, as compared to the US.

For example, in January, President Obama delivered a landmark speech supporting municipal broadband in Cedar Falls, Iowa, known for its ultra-fast 1 Gbps (1000 Mbps) network. The U.S. Federal Communications Commission then redefined “broadband” to mean minimum 25 Mbps, a forward-looking national standard demonstrating awareness of citizens' digital-era needs. Meanwhile, New York State is investing \$500 million to provide 100 Mbps Internet by 2019.

Canada's last national volley in digital strategy was Digital Canada 150, which had the less ambitious aim of connecting 98% of Canadians with 5 Mbps Internet by 2017. Yes, the federal government's aspirations for Canada's digital future max out at one-fifth the US' legal minimum. Canada's bottom-third OECD ranking for Internet speeds (Ookla Net Index, 2015) only adds to the dismay.

However, pioneering Canadian municipalities have sensed which way the data is blowing and launched themselves leeward:

Olds, Alberta created O-Net, a municipal Internet utility that revitalized Olds' economy and revolutionized education at Olds College, offering 1 Gbps Internet that is symmetrical – upload and download speed – and unlimited (no data caps).

Stratford, Ontario's municipal data utility serves

seven rural communities. Rhyzome Networks established Stratford's reputation as a technological innovation hub, inspired the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus and invigorated rural medical care.

QNet in Coquitlam, BC leases excess fibre capacity, resulting in local residents accessing unlimited 10 Mbps Internet for just \$20/month.

Fredericton and Moncton, New Brunswick boast free citywide, municipal wifi.

Megabit for megabit, these cities and communities are punching above their weight, demonstrating how municipal broadband is rooted in sound policy and can spark significant benefits.

The first rewards to ensue are increased cost-effectiveness, efficiency, economies of scale, revenue and savings, with other municipal departments being able to use the enhanced connection to improve their own services. QNet, for instance, has saved Coquitlam approximately \$360,000 annually.

Municipal broadband also stimulates the local economy by attracting and retaining small businesses and creating employment, such as 700 new jobs in Stratford. Furthermore, generated value remains within the community instead of flowing out toward distant offices.

Fundamentally, community networks promote universal access, particularly in low-income or rural areas that private providers underserve. Municipalities taking up the slack recognize that Internet access is an essential service and should not be left to private enterprise alone.

We know that private providers lack accountability to citizens: Telus blocked its own union's website during a 2005 strike and Bell Mobility charged northern subscribers fees for a fictional 911 service. With municipal broadband, addressing public interest concerns is

the very point and accountability is built in.

There are challenges, of course. Opponents argue that municipal broadband burdens taxpayers, constitutes unfair competition, disrupts market efficiency and imposes complex systems and technological responsiveness that municipalities cannot handle. However, incumbent carriers – historically heavily subsidized – sorely need such competition and municipalities hold demonstrable track records managing roads, sewage and other critical services with complex infrastructure, none of which are privatized in view of the public interest.

The first rewards to ensue are increased cost-effectiveness, efficiency, economies of scale, revenue and savings.

As a form of local activism, it may be no coincidence that small cities and rural towns are leading this charge. Municipal broadband has become a meaningful site of civic engagement uniting sundry parties. As O-Net's Nathan Kusiek told CKFM, “[W]e've had interest from communities probably on a weekly basis asking us how we've done this...”

Perhaps Industry Canada could give them a call as well. ◀

Cynthia Khoo is digital policy and research fellow with OpenMedia, a community based organization that safeguards the open Internet. **Steve Anderson** is the executive director of OpenMedia. A version of this piece was published in the March edition of *The Monitor*, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' (CCPA) monthly magazine.

BC's phoney “balanced budget”

by Reimar Kroecher

Our mainstream media is dutifully extolling BC's achievement of a balanced budget. Our liberal government, so we are told, has earned bragging rights for tightly controlling spending and preventing tax increases. However, even a cursory look at this budget reveals a different picture. To begin with, on the income side, there are millions of dollars worth of so-called “surplus properties” which are being sold. In other words, a lot of publicly owned land is privatized to help balance this budget. This is the same trick that school boards are using to balance their books: selling “surplus schools” because the funding from the province is inadequate. And it is the same trick the Campbell government used to balance the budget by selling BCRail a few years ago. There

is nothing to celebrate about that. If I sell a bedroom in my home to get the income to cover my expenses, should I celebrate balancing my budget?

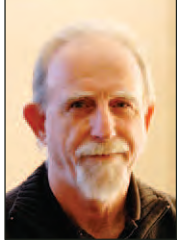
Secondly, the province is balancing its budget by siphoning away hundreds of millions of dollars from BC Hydro – money that BC Hydro does not have and must borrow. In fact, this is largely the cause of the dramatic increase in our hydro rates. ICBC is also increasing rates steadily so the province can collect millions of dollars every year. MSP premiums are up and ferry rates have gone through the roof; instead of tax increases, we have rapidly increasing user fees.

Finally, entire government departments are cut back so they can no longer do the job they are supposed to do. A good example is the Mount Polly mine disaster.

This tragedy, the largest environmental disaster in BC history, was the result of cutting back on safety inspections and the transfer of inspections away from independent ministry officials to contractors hired by the mining company. It was a clear conflict of interest. This might indeed be a way to get a balanced provincial budget, but at what cost?

These important facts are almost completely overlooked by our cheerleading mainstream media as it repeats *ad nauseam*: “balanced budget, balanced budget, the only province in Canada.” ◀

Reimar Kroecher is a retired economist who taught economics at Langara College for 33 years. He holds degrees in economics from UBC and UCLA.



StarWise

March 2015

THE SPRING equinox takes place on March 20 at 3:45 PM Pacific Daylight Savings Time (PDST). It is an auspicious astrological event and many cultures in ancient times used the spring equinox chart as their cosmic indicator as to how the year would go. I set the chart for Vancouver and the indications are excellent. Maybe "excellent" is a little over the top, but in the language of the stars, the equinox chart is radiating very positive and harmonious qualities. I wouldn't expect lollipops to be falling out of the sky, but if we lean into the tasks that lie before us, we stand a very good chance of doing rather well.

Just before I lull you into passivity with dreams of sugarplums and mega-dollar projects unfolding, know that life will be hot, dramatic and intense, as it should be when you dwell in a metropolis the size of Vancouver. Thirteen hours before the equinox, a solar eclipse takes place and it will cast its astrological shadow throughout the rest of 2015. Eclipses are associated with karma and in addition to personal karma, we have collective karma as well. On March 21, the Moon eclipses Mars and Uranus and we can expect some type of fireworks to manifest in the form of fires, earthquakes, accidents and violent incidents. It doesn't necessarily mean these events will take place, but the stars are showing the potential for some type of calamity to manifest. It could come about as gang activity, political turmoil and other sorts of mayhem. No new news here. It's the same old story.

Let's get back to the sugarplums. As I was saying, the stars are indicating a fruitful year – a year of abundance and growth – and that we need to be a bit more revolutionary and bold in our approach to our concerns. We are truly blessed and live in the land of plenty, with a beautiful culture and geography, peopled by a vast assortment of souls from every corner of the globe. We must strive to join hands and form a giant circle that includes the benefit of all for we are only as strong as the weakest link in the chain. We can be the role model for other cultures to follow, as even with all of our problems and blemishes, Vancouver is still the greatest place on the planet in which to live. She protects and nurtures us; in turn, we need to nurture and protect our sacred land and waters. We must count our blessings, knowing we are the caretakers of this beautiful land.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.

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**ARIES** Mar 21 - Apr 19

It's your time to shine; it's an epoch time in which many new beginnings are taking root. Find your direction and head off into a most adventurous year. 2015 is your year to pioneer. Don't know what to do? Start by eliminating what you know is not worthy, real or true and proceed from there.

**TAURUS** Apr 20 - May 21

The past comes into play and it is now time to pay it forward as you clear up old accounts and various forms of indebtedness. The action begins mid-month and continues throughout March and April. All kinds of excitement await thee. Love and adventure, along with other forms of dynamic creativity, manifest now.

**GEMINI** May 22 - Jun 20

You are a dual sign and can handle multiple tasks at the same time. You will need that skill as 2015 unfolds. One part abundance and one part scarcity; one part gathering and one part letting go takes place. Embrace it all and fear not letting go of anything; new energy fills the void.

**CANCER** Jun 21 - Jul 22

Your career status is on an upward trajectory and you should assist this energy enthusiastically. Social circles expand as well, probably in proportion to your career activities. Muster your courage, don't look back and know the energy is right and ready to help you in achieving your objectives. Meet all challenges head on.

**LEO** Jul 23 - Aug 22

You can groove along in a mellow way and do okay or you can roar like a lion and make yourself heard and be loved and respected for the various talents you can bring to the table. In other words, you're hot, even more so if you believe in yourself and have no shame in your game.

**VIRGO** Aug 23 - Sep 22

The full Moon on March 5 will illuminate the pathway ahead for you. It will become obvious as to which way you should go and what you should do. It may not be a cakewalk and clarity will be needed to sort through the confusion mid-month. Do one thing at a time.

**LIBRA** Sep 23 - Oct 22

A time of contrast and controversy has arrived and you will have to use that super bio computer sitting on your shoulders to sort through the myriad complexities that will arise. It's really not a big deal unless you make it so. No sense turning molehills into mountains. All kinds of exciting challenges manifest.

**SCORPIO** Oct 23 - Nov 21

You may feel a little weathered by the events of the last two years or so and now you just have a bit more to go before you can really rest and let down. You are gifted with great resilience and recuperative powers. Don't give up or let up, but keep moving towards your goals.

**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22 - Dec 21

It's time to weigh up what is real and what is true. Use your archery skills to pinpoint the target and concentrate before you let loose your arrows. There's great planetary support going on and you have even more luck than usual. Count on that luck to see you through the times when you cannot see clearly.

**CAPRICORN** Dec 22 - Jan 19

Play the long game by giving yourself a few years to see the realities coming your way for certainly they're coming. Life is changing at a rapid pace and it's hard to know just what to do. Fear not; your karma has you covered. Poverty, wealth or whatever is destined is already written.

**AQUARIUS** Jan 20 - Feb 19

Beat the drum a little louder in the first 10 days of March, as you are likely to be heard then. The planets are lending great support and any effort on your part will not go unnoticed. Plus Jupiter the great benefactor is casting his glance your way indicating that your timing is right.

**PISCES** Feb 20 - Mar 20

Communications become enhanced this month. It would be to your benefit to first hammer out your words and what you want to say and then say it, portray it and wing it if you have to. Pay attention to your dreams and psychic impressions around March 18. Your psyche speaks rather loudly at that time.



A 50-foot square garden grows a lot of food and seeds.

Seed selection: To answer the question, “What shall I grow?” ask yourself what you and your family like to eat most. Plants adapt to cultural conditions so organic seeds grow best for organic gardeners and regional seeds have an edge over seeds grown in other climates because these plants have adapted to local conditions.

If you want to save seeds, start with open-pollinated varieties that have not had their genetic makeup changed by hybridization or genetic modification. Check number of days to maturity and select plants that will mature and produce in your garden’s microclimate. Tip: When purchasing seeds, order winter garden seeds at the same time to ensure you have the seeds you need at sowing time in June and July.

Separate seed packets into three categories: spring-planted, cool weather varieties, summer heat-loving varieties and winter cold-hardy varieties. File packets into three sections in a shoebox, using recipe cards marked A to Z to file seeds in alphabetical order in each section. Filing this way makes seeds easier to find and prevents reordering leftovers.

Soil: Most vegetables grow best in full sun, in well-drained, fertile soil (pH 6-7.5). A gently sloping site with full southern exposure would be ideal, but any site free of large tree roots that receives at least seven to 11 hours of sun

a day could work. Adding organic matter builds humus in soil, which increases its ability to hold moisture and nutrients. Here are my ‘Four Secrets of Successful Soil Building:’ compost, manure, leaves and seaweed. If you add these amendments to soil every year, I guarantee you will notice an incredible difference in food quality and productivity.

I make ‘Super Duper’ compost using layers of leaves, weeds (no seeds), herbaceous clippings, manure (can be fresh), grass clippings, spoiled hay, seaweed, sawdust and whatever uncontaminated organic waste I can get my hands on. To make it ‘Super Duper,’ I add layers of comfrey, nettles and horsetail when in season. I don’t add kitchen waste because it attracts rodents. I stockpile food waste in a rat-proof composter and when full, I bury it into deep trenches in the garden. I plant on top of these trenches right away, as by the time roots make contact with buried matter, it will have been broken down by myriad soil microbes.

Fertilizers: Slow-release, natural-source fertilizer nourishes teeming microscopic soil life that makes nutrients available to plants. To make granular organic fertilizer with little expense, purchase ingredients in bulk at a farm supply store. Basic recipe: Mix four parts (by volume) seed meal (N) with one part dolomite lime (pH), add one part rock phosphate (P) and one half-

Spring into action

for year-round food production

part kelp meal (K).

Companion planting: Communities of plants work together to keep bugs at bay, attract pollinators and improve plant growth. Large-scale monocultures provide shining beacons to pests and disease and require constant use of pesticides. Small-scale, diversified food production, including hedgerows, flowers, grasses, herbs and berries, empowers wildlife to take control of potential problems.

Crop rotations: When plants are grown in the same place every year, it’s a question of time before problems arise. After seven years, club root develops in Brassicas; after 10 years, white rot develops in garlic, weevil populations explode where peas and beans are grown and blight is passed on to all members of the Solanaceae family. Crop rotations break the life cycle of common pests and diseases because the host plant is no longer present.

Pest prevention: Deer, rabbits, birds and raccoons play havoc with food gardens. Deer have a broad range of tastes ranging from fruit trees to broccoli. Raccoons and birds can cause a ripe corn or cherry crop to disappear overnight. Netting and other physical barriers work well to prevent this. In my experience, the only way to keep deer out is to erect an eight-foot-tall fence. For pest prevention, observation is key, followed by identification. Always know what you are destroying and use the least toxic method to begin.

Seeding: At The Garden Path, the ‘primary seeding’ happens in early March in a thoroughly cleaned greenhouse. All glass panes, work surfaces and the floor are scrubbed with a 1:10 dilution of hydrogen peroxide, with the intention of getting rid of algae build-up, *botrytis*, overwintering bugs, spores and egg masses. If you don’t have the luxury of a greenhouse, there are many ways to improvise cold frames using recycled wood and glass windows. Cool weather crops such as peas, lettuce, Brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts), onions, leeks, kale, chard, radicchio, endive and spinach can all be seeded in an unheated greenhouse.

Heat-loving plants such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cape gooseberries, tomatillos and basil need more warmth for germination and are grown in a propagation box, on top of heater cables covered with sand. They need longer to develop, unlike beans, squash and cucumber seeds that germinate fast and are seeded in May for June transplanting.

Weed control: The best time to weed is when the soil is moist and you can pull or dig established weeds out easily. In early spring, I roam the garden pulling weeds, especially perennial broadleaf – deeply rooted plants such as buttercup and dandelion. At the end of the season, I smother any weed seeds using thick layers of organic mulch or compost, an activity I refer to as organic weed and feed.

Saving seeds: Without access to local food seeds, we will not be able to feed ourselves in future so it’s imperative to start seed banks in every community for this purpose. I recommend that every seed saver at least obtain a copy of *How to Save Your Own Seeds*. You can order it for \$15 from Seeds of Diversity at www.seeds.ca (Click on Publications.) Collect seeds from the recommended minimum number of plants in order to preserve genetic diversity of the strain.

Winter gardening: From October to April, many food plants can still be harvested. In harsh winters, cold frames may be necessary for leafy greens, but cabbages, leeks, collards, chard, beets and kale can survive freezing conditions outside. Direct seed the garden from June to August, following earlier crops of peas, potatoes, lettuce or garlic. Seed transplants from June to July (grow them raised up off the ground to keep bugs and slugs away) and transplant into the garden no later than mid-September so plants are well established by winter. **K**



Carolyn Herriot is author of *The Zero-Mile Diet, A Year-Round Guide to Growing Organic Food* and *The Zero-Mile Diet Cookbook* (Harbour Publishing).

Lynne Quarmby

One scientist Harper can't muzzle runs for Parliament

by Bruce Mason



Award-winning scientist Dr. Lynne Quarmby is leaving teaching and her lab at SFU to run for the Green Party in the upcoming federal election. Photo by Greg Ehlers, Creative Services, SFU.

“Make It Happen,” the theme for International Women’s Day on March 8, is something Lynne Quarmby has long embraced and embodied. To honour her achievements and progress, Common Ground shares some of Lynne’s thoughts following her recent, rapid, high-profile, but highly personal, transformation. Lynne talks about the decades of hard work that led to her establishing her SFU lab, risking her success and future at pipeline protests, being arrested for civil disobedience and accepting the unanimous nomination as Green Party candidate in the new federal riding of Burnaby North – Seymour. From Burnaby Mountain to Ottawa, this is Dr. Lynne Quarmby’s take on what it takes to “Make It Happen.”

Bruce Mason: When you were chosen as one of BC’s most influential women in 2010, it was noted you are a vocal advocate for more women in elite research. Yet I once overheard someone yell at you “Get a job!” during a march. Let’s start with becoming a scientist.

Lynne Quarmby: [Laughter] I’ve always tried to “make it happen” and could tell stories about misogyny and struggling in science as a young woman. But let’s stay positive. I was raised in the rural Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island, the daughter of a plumber.

I delighted in learning to live in and love nature – in forests, along shorelines and in the ocean.

My passion has been trying to understand the molecular machinery that enables single-celled green algae (pond scum) to swim. And research unexpectedly led to the discovery of a gene that helped unlock mysteries of polycystic kidney disease. I have earned degrees from UBC in marine biology and oceanography, got my PhD in genetics in Connecticut – where I had my son Jacob – and pursued postdoctoral studies in Dallas with Alfred Gilman, who later earned the Nobel Prize. I have since had the welcome opportunity to move back home and run a research lab as well as teach and chair SFU’s department of molecular biology and biochemistry.

That’s my brief CV, but throughout this life journey, I have served on numerous commissions and committees on women in science, as well as mentoring and speaking out. Now, science itself is under siege in Canada. And that’s taken me away from my microscope! Stephen Harper has muzzled government scientists and labelled people who disagree with his dangerous plans as “radicals.” This ongoing destruction of evidence-based decision-making is what eventually led me to civil disobedience and the Green Party.

BM: Right now, some readers might be thinking: “Green is a split or wasted vote, a one-trick party of environmental protestors, with no chance for power.”

LQ: Power? Greens will likely hold the balance and are willing to work with either the NDP or Liberals if they meet our two non-negotiable demands: support for proportional representation and real action on climate change. Stephen Harper formed a majority government with just 24% of the eligible vote. We don’t necessarily need many seats to prevent something like that from ever happening again as well as to become global leaders in climate change action. Strategic voting? We are running very strong candidates in the 2015 election; watch for a tidal wave of Green to wash over Vancouver Island and up Burnaby Mountain. [Laughter] Seriously, I’m running Green because it is the only national party with enough respect for the electorate to be direct and honest. Full stop.

As well, I have assurances from leader Elizabeth May that I will not be “whipped.” I fully endorse and support our platform, Vision Green (<http://greenparty.ca/en/vision-green>), but I will work for my constituents and vote my conscience after full consideration of information available and in the best interests of the people of Burnaby North – Seymour. No other party gives me that freedom.

The time has come for everyone to become active environmentalists, along with whatever else we do. It’s also essential to connect the dots between climate change and justice. Pipeline battles aren’t about left-right politics. Climate change is all about up-down politics – the political power of extreme wealth oppressing the rest of us.

It’s about inequality. For example, less than 1% of the profits from the Kinder Morgan pipeline would flow into the BC economy. Our country’s wealthiest 86 families own more than the poorest 11 million Canadians taken together; 50% of us own less than 6% of wealth in our nation. And that disgraceful, unhealthy imbalance is getting much worse every year, lining the pockets of the already rich while threatening our environment, social services and democracy.

I’m not being immodest in thinking this riding needs me to help halt the Harper agenda. I intend to gather the vote – not split it – from the 39% of eligible Canadians who saw no point in voting in the last federal election. From the traditional Conservative, Liberal and NDP voters who are very concerned about bloated government, mismanaged finances and threats to Canada’s values and democracy. From voters who have had enough of negative, partisan politics and omnibus bills. From people who see a much brighter future in clean technology. And from the First Nations people with whom I have stood to protect our land and water.

Recognizing the links between prosperity, a healthy environment and a healthy democracy, I am now very aware they actually go hand in hand. I hope to speak to the power of this truth and have become actively engaged in income inequality, indigenous rights, *continued p.30...*

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Truthful actual experiences from real people: ■ **Reflux gave me a sore throat and I could not sing in the church choir anymore.** After taking Bell #39 I have no more reflux and rejoice in singing again. *Helene Giroux, 65, Quebec, QC.* ■ **Have family history of heartburn.** For last 10 years I suffered a lot with acid reflux. I told all family members about #39 being all natural, giving quick relief with no side effects and no antacids needed anymore. *Michael Fasheh, 49, Port Ranch, CA.* ■ **Heartburn, acid reflux, stomach trouble for many years.** Doctors gave me different pills, but I had no lasting relief. Had every test known to man. I finally talked to my health food store and they said Bell Acidic Stomach/Alkaline Balance really works. It sure does. I had my husband and son take it and they all had the same results. I can now eat even spicy food with no problems. *Verna Conti, 80, London, ON.*



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University of Toronto professor states that 69% of adults have sleeping problems. Bad sleep reduces physical and creative energy all next day. Almost all families are affected. Sleep apnea may cause high blood pressure, strokes, heart attacks and irregular heart beats. Can be very destructive in relationships. **Hundreds of true testimonials on the Bell website from people like you.** **Real people wrote:** ■ **I really didn't snore or gasp for air anymore.** I sleep through the night and feel rested and refreshed in the morning. *Mark Wilson, 40, Hudson, NH.* ■ **Sleep apnea capsules worked first night.** For 15 years I had sleep apnea and my doctor made me buy a CPAP machine, which I could not use. Finally Bell #23 helped the first night and every night thereafter. Like a miracle. Unbelievable. *Karen Braun, 67, Glace Bay, NS.* ■ **For 20 years I was waking up frequently gasping for air.** During the day I would start napping every time I would sit down, because I was tired. Since taking #23 sleeping 6 hours is heaven. It made a substantial change in my life. *Mary C. Myrick, 62, Jackson, MS.* ■ **It is such a joy** not having to use the CPAP machine anymore. *Wayne Burse, 63, Beamsville, ON.*

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say dozens of delighted users with full names and towns on the Bell website. Works by cleaning blood inside rather than attacking skin from the outside and leaving the actual cause untreated. Here are a few examples:

Actual Results. ■ **After 1 week** my severe acne became quite mild and after 2 weeks it had completely vanished. I suffered for 5 stressful years of having acne and extremely dry, irritated skin. Bell Help for Skin Disorders "saved my life". My skin is now beautiful and you would never know I suffered from acne and other skin problems for years. *Zach Lustgarten, 18, Oshawa, ON.*

RED NOSE/CHEEKS ROSACEA gone in less than a week. Was fighting it for 30 years with topical creams and prescriptions without getting satisfaction. I live a healthy life, don't smoke and don't drink. People thought a reddish face comes from drinking. This is a myth. Will take it for the rest of my life when needed. *Donald E. Gillespie, 56, Innisfil, ON.* **PSORIASIS** ■ **I had severe psoriasis** over 95% of my body. Last 5 years I have stunned every doctor and dermatologist. I spent tons of money on remedies. After I got Bell Help for Skin Disorders, I've never seen anything work as fast in my life. Within 2 days I saw my skin clearing up. I'm speechless. It was inexpensive compared with what I spent before. *Jessica Shantz, 25, Dawson Creek, BC.* **ECZEMA For 6 years my family doctor and dermatologist** tried many medications and creams. After taking Bell Help for Skin Disorders for just a few days my eczema itching stopped and my face started to clear up. After suffering so long I am amazed with the results. *Andy Yuen, 58, Vancouver, BC.*



#60 NPN 80044199



Calcified swollen fingers

Calcified hardened arteries

By Dr. C. Hammoud M.H., Ph.D.

Calcification can be removed quickly on fingers (where we can see it). Bell Calcium Build-Up #71 can remove calcium in arteries, soft organs, heart valves, including all joints may become less smooth or even painful from the calcium build-up. Everybody knows the meaning of calcified, hardened arteries and too few take the simple step to rectify it. Calcification of the joints often comes together with osteoarthritis and both health problems can be treated at the same time or separately. Bell #71 does one more important thing, it helps to direct the calcium intake to our bones where we want it and need it. Both are simple matters we can understand and easily treat. Everybody saw the TV commercials how a calcium remover cleans shower heads and they become sparkling clean. This is what Bell #71 may do for your fingers, arteries, organs and joints if taken regularly.

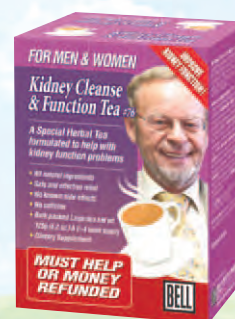
Names and towns of people are on our website:

■ Within a week of using #71 the lumps on my fingers have gone away ■ I'm surprised to see actual results of the build-up gradually disappearing. I also believe now it will reduce plaque from my arteries, where I cannot see it ■ I was aware of calcium and hardening of the arteries. I tried Bell #71 and after one bottle I started to notice less stiffening in my knees and much to my surprise a difference in my hands. ■ I had limited joint mobility. After taking #71 for 8 months I have progressed to walking 5-10 miles every day. ■ I have been on Bell Calcium Build-Up for 4 months and I am a different person now. I am also taking Bell Shark Cartilage #1 which is helping my arthritis.



#71 NPN 80045172

Snoring? Sleep apnea? Trouble falling asleep?



#76 NPN 80035543

Kidney function

My own kidney function increased from 45% to 61% within 2 months established by blood tests by drinking the Bell Kidney Cleanse & Function Tea #76. Mount Sinai School of Medicine, May 2010 Newsletter, states that there is no conventional medicine to restore kidney function and NSAIDS drugs are not recommended. Kidney transplant is an option. However, all transplants require life long rejection drugs that kill the immune system and make a person defenseless against all minor and major illnesses.

Excerpts from our website: ■ Kidney GFR rate went from 29 to 43. ■ My kidney function went from 40% to 80% ■ Within 2-3 months my kidney function went from 46% to 63% ■ Passed 3 small stones after drinking only 5-6 cups of Bell Kidney Tea. ■ You will find on our website full length testimonials with names of people and towns you can call if you want more information.

60 MORE NATURAL MEDICINES on the Bell website. All guaranteed to help.

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100% Truthful testimonials with full names and towns. Real people you can call, if you want more reassurance. No money is paid for testimonials. To ensure this product is right for you, always read labels and follow instructions.



President's own story: 15 years ago I started to have arthritis, prostate, kidney, snoring and sleep apnea problems, which were all helped quickly with natural health products. I made it my life's purpose to help others. *Nick A. Jerch*

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MAR-APR

Andean Wisdom Teachings with Jhaimy Alvarez-Acosta from Cusco, Peru. Workshops, retreats, talks & personal healings. Vancouver www.childrenofthe7rays.com - 778-279-7234.

MAR 6-8

Introduction to Hand Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Friday Introduction 7:30PM, \$10; Course \$395 + GST. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

MAR 13-15

Indian Head Massage Weekend Course with Susan Allen. Friday 7-9PM, Saturday & Sunday 9AM-5PM. Course Fee: \$395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

MAR 19 & 20

Free author talk with Dr. Dale Dewar on From Hiroshima to Fukushima to You: A Primer on Radiation and Health. In Victoria. Mar 19: 7-8:30PM, Spartacus Books, 3378 Findlay Street. Mar 20: 1:30-3PM, St. John the Divine Anglican Church, 1611 Quadra Street.

MAR 20-22

Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Friday Introduction 7:30PM, \$10; Course \$395 + GST. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

MAR 22

Adventure into Time and Beyond with Rifa Hodgson presents Intuitive Experiential Workshop - Reunite with your Soulmates, 10:30AM-1:30PM, West Vancouver, Ambleside, rifa@lifebetweenlives.ca
http://www.lifebetweenlives.ca/past_life_workshops_events.htm 1-888-606-8463.

MAR 27-29

The Secret of the Heart: A weekend retreat with Burt Harding (www.burtharding.com). At Krishnamurti Educational Centre of Canada. Beautiful ocean-front setting near Victoria. Register now at www.krishnamurti-canada.ca, programs@krishnamurti-canada.ca, 250-744-3354.

MAR 28-29

Shamanism workshop with Gaye Hanson: Connect with universal wisdom, power animals, & spirit guides. Bethlehem Retreat Centre, Nanaimo. 9am-5pm. \$350 includes lunch. Contact: judykisch@shaw.ca

APR 1

Clearmind presents Finding What You Have in the Middle of What You've Got with Catherine O'Kane. 7:30PM sharp, Unity of Vancouver, 5840 Oak Street @ 41st. Bring display ad this page for free admission. Info: www.clearmind.com

APR 11

Free movie on GMOs: The Future of Food, hosted by GE Free Tri-Cities. 7PM, Cornerstone Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 1415 Noons Creek Dr., Coquitlam. Donations welcome. The Tri-Cities group is taking GE Free resolutions to their communities this spring. Come out and share in the discussion on how to support a GE Free zone in your community. For info: www.facebook.com/gefreebc, 604-475-4457.

APR 11, 18 & MAY 9, 16

Four Saturday Mornings in Spring: Creating a New Story - 14-hour interactive program. Reveal creative potential through life transitions while exploring innate ability to live more intentionally with meaning, heart, and creative spirit. Kitsilano Neighbourhood House. Earlybird \$280. 604-732-3681; 604-684-4132. elmuir@telus.net; patsvision@uniserve.com

APR 14-16

World Uranium Symposium in Quebec City: Over 100 national and international experts on uranium and nuclear issues. Open to public. www.uranium2015.org

APR 17-19

The Body Soul & Spirit Expo: Three days of inspiring exhibits, lectures, workshops, & more. Featuring Lynn Andrews, Brian Clement & Miguel Ruiz Jr. PNE Forum (Hastings & Renfrew). Tickets www.bodysoulspiritexpo.com or call 1-877-560-6830.

APR 18-19

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Daily Dying and Living Well with Dr. Ravi Ravindra (www.ravindra.ca) At Krishnamurti Educational Centre of Canada. Beautiful ocean-front setting near Victoria. Register now at www.krishnamurti-canada.ca, programs@krishnamurti-canada.ca, 250-744-3354.

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MAY 7

Langara College Health & Human Services Information Session: 5-7:30PM, 601 W. Broadway, Unit M-11. See website for lecture schedule. Info: 604-323-5926, holistichealth@langara.bc.ca www.langara.bc.ca/hhs

MAY 23

Open House - Institute of Holistic Nutrition (Vancouver): Course/Career opportunities, exhibits, lectures & more. 10AM-3:30PM, 604 West Broadway, Ste. 300. 604-558-4000. Lecture descriptions at www.instituteofholisticnutrition.com

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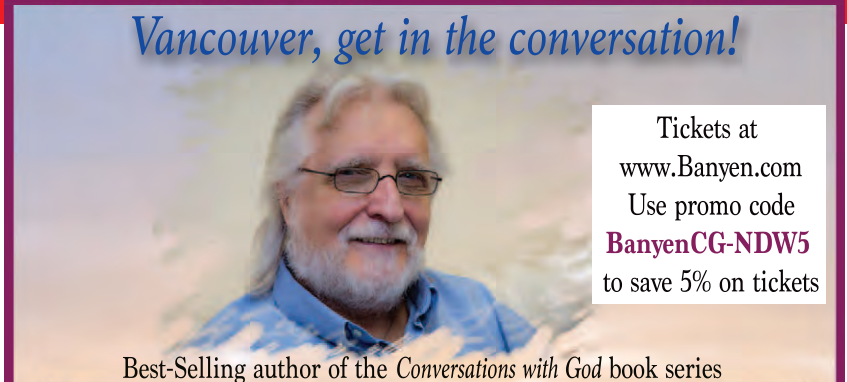
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Throughout my life, I have been absorbed in my science, my family, doing my job, keeping my footprint

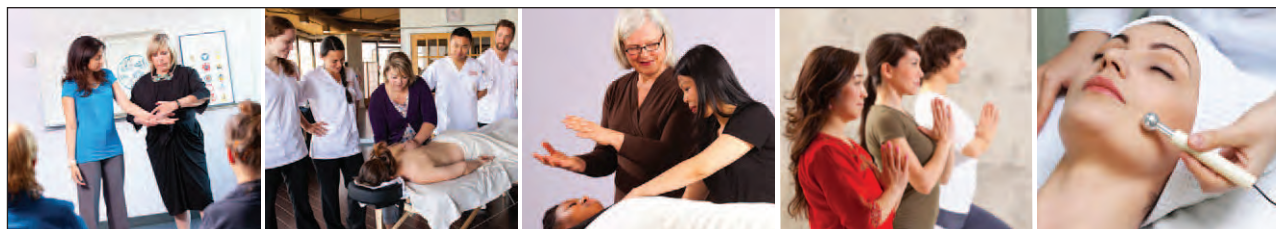
small. The failure in Copenhagen in 2009 was my wake-up call. I could no longer focus on cells while our politicians dithered. There is no time left for that. And so with increasing frequency, I wrote letters, attended and spoke at protests, met with elected representatives and wrote op-eds.

I began to question the value of own-

ing my home and having retirement savings in a world spiralling into negative space of reduced freedom of speech and accelerating climate change. With no inter-generational and global justice, how much is really left of future value for the vast majority?

Last fall, I was sued by Kinder Morgan for peaceful protest in a public park and

for writing about why I would risk arrest. Shocked to my core that this could happen in Canada, I faced a lawsuit – brought by a corporation – that would have left me homeless, with criminal charges that would have prevented me from visiting my son in the US and attending international conferences. My letters and protests, even my civil disobedience – the last resource of an engaged citizen – had little or no impact because power has become so concentrated in a very small, homo-



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geneous group. In Canada's case, [it has concentrated] around Stephen Harper. To really make change, the only step that is left is to stop complaining and get myself to Ottawa.

I am setting aside a successful career in science because of the need for urgent action on climate change and restoring our democracy. Once again, I am drawn by my love for our astonishing world – this time into politics – compelled to do what I can to protect our environment and to see us move into an era of prosperity where materialism manifests as treasuring, rather than acquiring. The values of people must once again trump the bottom line of multinational corporations and I am hopeful that we can and must ‘Make This Happen.’ ◀

Bruce Mason is a Vancouver and Gabriola-Island based five-string banjo player, gardener, freelance writer and author of **Our Clinic**. Email brucemason@shaw.ca For more information about Lynne's lab at SFU, visit www.quarmby.ca

by Joseph Roberts

Edward Snowden film wins Oscar

The Edward Snowden documentary *Citizenfour* won Best Documentary at this year's Oscars. Director Laura Poitras accepted the award alongside Glenn Greenwald and Lindsay Mills, Snowden's girlfriend.

In her acceptance speech Poitras said, "The disclosures that Edward Snowden reveals don't only expose a threat to our privacy, but to our democracy itself. When the most important decisions being made, affecting all of us, are made in secret, we lose our ability to check the powers that control. Thank you to Edward Snowden, for his courage, and for the many other whistleblowers. I share this with Glenn Greenwald and other journalists who are exposing truth."

The film documents Snowden's 2013 National Security Agency (NSA) leaks. Poitras went to Hong Kong to meet the stranger code-named Citizenfour in his emails. She filmed the meeting in real time as Edward revealed what he discovered and why he decided to tell the public. *Citizenfour* shows the NSA's secret, illegal surveillance of millions of citizens in America and around the world.

The American Civil Liberties Union forwarded the following statement by Snowden: "When Laura Poitras asked me if she could film our encounters, I was extremely reluctant. I'm grateful that I allowed her to persuade me. The result is a brave and brilliant film that deserves the honour and recognition it has received. My hope is that this award will encourage more people to see the film and be inspired by its message that ordinary citizens, working together, can change the world."

Common Ground's April 2014 edition featured an article entitled *Take Back our Internet from NSA*, based on Edward Snowden's Prism TED Talk in Vancouver – a live Internet video from Russia streamed on March 18, 2014. An excerpt follows; the entire text is available at commonground.ca (Click on Archives.)



"The principles that have been the foundation of this project have been the public interest and the principles that underlie the journalistic establishment in the US and around the world. I think if the press is now saying we support this,

government and private lives. I look forward to working with everyone to see that happen."

Now that *Citizenfour* has received an Oscar for its courageous truth-telling, it is our duty to watch it because the

this is something that needed to happen; that's a powerful argument, but it's not final. That's something the public should decide. The government has hinted they want some kind of deal, a compromise deal to come back. But I want to make it very clear. I did not do this to be safe. I did this to do what was right. I won't stop working in the public interest just to benefit myself.

"I would say the last year has been a reminder that democracy may die behind closed doors. We don't have to give up privacy to have good government; we don't have to give up liberty to have security. By working together, we can have open

only safe place for democracy is in an informed citizenry.

As *Common Ground's* March issue goes to press, Canada is locked in a fierce and rushed debate over surveillance of Canadians and the Harper Government's anti-terrorism Bill C51. The proposed new law would give Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS) sweeping new powers of surveillance, arrest and detention on the mere suspicion that a person "may" – rather than the standard "will" – commit a terrorist act. Four former prime ministers, various Supreme Court judges and constitutional and legal experts say such powers of arrest should only be given to the RCMP. As the media-hyped climate of fear about jihadist terrorism rises, Harper's Conservative government is insisting that independent and parliamentary oversight of how the law is administered is not necessary. Yet four of the five "Five Eyes" nations – The UK, the US, Australia and New Zealand – have such oversight in place. The surveillance and harassing of environmental activists has already begun. Each one of us needs to get involved immediately to protect our civil rights and democracy. ■

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