



John Horgan MLA Malahat-Juan de Fuca

Community Report MARCH 2008

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Another year and another laundry list of promises from the B.C. Government. This year's focus is tackling climate change over the next decade. Unfortunately, while government talks a good game about addressing climate change, its real decisions on land use and transportation in our community will make things worse, not better, for residents.

Last year, Gordon Campbell introduced legislation mandating a reduction in our collective greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020. I supported this because I believe we want to do our part to reduce emissions for our families and future generations.

One year, and two Throne Speeches and budgets later, we're still waiting for the substantive changes necessary to meet the global challenge. This year's budget introduces a new tax on gasoline and home heating fuel but a tax is not a climate change plan.

And while you're paying more, large polluters get a free pass as subsidies for oil and gas exploration are increasing to over \$300 million. Hard to see fairness in that equation.

Still waiting...

The impacts of many of government's other decisions are being felt by local residents and our environment.

We're still wrestling with the fallout from the Forest Minister's back-room deal to allow Western Forest Products to pull thousands of hectares of private forest lands out

Government talks a good game, but...

of their Tree Farm Licences on Vancouver Island. I can't figure out how making a land-use decision that will increase urban sprawl on the southwest coast will decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Government is building transit to reduce congestion and emissions in the Lower Mainland while just paying lip service to our needs. Residents are not asking for a pricey SkyTrain line or a second highway. We're simply looking for decent transit options and a modest commuter rail system on existing lines.

New green Building Code requirements for energy and waste conservation, retrofit programs, transit improvements and a much harder line on polluters. Those are the green polices that will resonate with the public. Sadly, practical proposals seem to take a back seat to slogans and corporate handouts.

So while government will bombard us with taxpayer-funded ads about its latest visions for a greener British Columbia, I'll keep waiting and hoping and fighting to force Victoria to hear the real concerns of the residents of Malahat-Juan de Fuca.



John invited students Meagan Blaquiére (Belmont) and Kaitlynn Parten (UVic), to the Legislature to listen to the Throne Speech. They also took a tour of the Legislature and met Carole James.
FROM LEFT: MEAGAN, CAROLE, KAITLYNN, JOHN

COMMUNITY EVENTS

March 10 Sooke Community Choir "Spring Singout" with Sooke elementary school choirs. 7 pm, Edward Milne Community Theatre. By Donation.

March 10-20 Pacific Festival of the Book. Enjoy author talks and poetry readings, panels and symposiums, visual art displays and interactive hands-on learning activities that explore a diversity of ideas and perspectives. Info & schedule, phone 250 477-9089.

March 14 3rd Annual Senior Celebration, Pearkes Recreation Centre, 10am-4pm. 65+ eye-catching exhibits by seniors & senior groups including artists, artisans, authors, athletes, entertainers, hobbyists, crafters, clubs, actors, & historians. Day-long entertainment

from over a dozen senior entertainers & performance groups, including dancers, musicians, singers, actors, & storytellers. Hosted by Senior Living Magazine. Info: 250 479-4705.

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Bench School kids have it in the bag

“Ban the plastic bag” was the message students from Cowichan Bay’s Bench School delivered to John in February. Students in grades 2–5, who are members of the school’s *Make a Difference* club, gave a presentation to parents, teachers and their local MLA, outlining the dangers plastic shopping bags cause to animals and our environment.



John invited the students to come to the

Legislature and make their case to the Minister of the Environment. Taking him up on his offer, students travelled to Victoria, had a tour of the buildings, and met with the Minister.

John is very proud of these young people and told them the work they’re doing right here at home will help make the world a better place.

Commuter Rail an Option

Commuter rail between the West Shore and downtown Victoria may be one step closer to becoming a reality. A recent report, commissioned by Communities for Commuter Rail, shows the cost of operating trains is much less than originally thought.

Thousands of people could be out of their cars and on the rails if federal and provincial officials get on board with local governments. John Horgan says the report’s findings are surprising and encouraging. “Once you build it, people will use it and we can grow it from there,” said Horgan. Another positive is that the tracks are



already there, meaning the highway won’t be further congested during construction.

When Gordon Campbell unveiled his Transportation Plan in January, billions of dollars were committed to the Lower Mainland projects but very little

came to our part of the province, even though we’re the second largest metropolitan centre. Despite calls from Horgan and community groups, there was no funding for any light rail options on the Southern Island.



Sooke Community Spirit Flag Raising

Celebrating the Spirit of BC Week and BC’s 150th birthday, the Spirit of BC Flag was raised on February 8 at Sooke Municipal Hall. John was happy to be part of the celebration and also took time to sign *The Friendship Book*, which has travelled throughout the region collecting signatures.

John joins Sooke Mayor Janet Evans and other community members in raising the Spirit of BC Flag.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

March 15-21 Grand re-opening: Goldstream Nature House with re-finished hardwood floors, 10am–3pm. Park plants & animals are starting to detect the warmer weather. Campground opens for full service with updated shower buildings. Free activities, games, crafts. Info: goldstream@naturehouse.ca or call 250 882-3832.

March 17 Luck of the Irish Skate, Juan de Fuca Arena 1:45–3pm. Wear green & be seen! Treasure hunt & prizes. Regular Admission.

March 23 Easter Event, Shawnigan Lake Community Centre, 12:30pm. Face painting, crafts, bouncer, etc. to 2pm. Easter egg hunt at 1 pm. Free family event (donations appreciated!) Bring Your Own Basket and join the fun! Info: 250 743-4550 or 250 743-2137.

March 25 Shirley Easter Craft Fair, 10am–4pm, Shirley Community Hall.

Every Monday & Wednesday Parent-Tot Playtime, Goldstream Neighbourhood House from 9:00–11:30am. For 0–5 year olds and their parents or caregivers to enjoy creative activities, Mother Goose circle time and snacks. Info: info@capfamilies.org or 250 391-4320.

April 7 Stop School Land Sales Rally at the Legislature, 11:30 am. A province-wide rally to highlight and stop the sell-off of public school lands and convince the government to fully fund capital spending and support sustainable education. Email bc.lands@gmail.com or phone Jessica at 250 598-9272 for more info.