

Time for transport action, not plans

During the flurry of government announcements leading up to the “snap” election call, the highly anticipated South Vancouver Island Transportation Strategy was released.

When this study was announced by the minister of transportation in 2019, we were told it would be a blueprint for transportation issues in the years to come. Claire Trevena said this in early 2019: “I’m anticipating that this will lead to a comprehensive regional plan for all types of transportation.”

As a mayor who has long been an advocate for regional transportation solutions, I was hoping for so much more from this “plan.”

Unfortunately, I don’t believe this study hit its target.

There is no comprehensive strategy for moving people and goods in our region, and most of the plan is simply initiatives that are already being undertaken such as expanding the network of regional trails.

Many of the “ideas” are simply rehashed initiatives that already exist in the 2014 Capital Regional District transportation plan. Ironically, that 2014 plan includes this sentence: “Plans are in place. It is time to take action.”

Any truly visionary ideas, such as rail or marine connections, are listed in this new “plan” as long-term strategies with no information stating what “long term” means.

From what I can see, this plan will only lead to worsening gridlock, with no concrete ideas and actions to alleviate that. Vancouver Island deserves so much more, and we must demand that the province make substantial investments on our Island. We must also demand that the province assist local government in setting up a regional governance body for transportation issues. Transportation decisions have been made in an ad hoc manner for far too long.

David Screech
Mayor of View Royal

PST pause sounds like shark-jumping

Re: “Wilkinson says Liberals would eliminate PST for a year,” Sept. 28.

Liberal Leader Andrew Wilkinson’s election promise to do away with the PST for a year sounds like the political equivalent of “jumping the shark.” Surely there are more fiscally responsible ways of dealing with the pandemic without giving away nearly \$7 billion. Doesn’t he realize much of that money would go to rich people?

Providing directed economic relief to the poor makes far more sense. They would spend the money, rather than buying more stock. It looks like this is just meant to buy votes, rather than help those who need it most.

S.I. Petersen
Nanaimo

Liberals’ financial acumen lacking

We’ve seen this one before under the B.C. Liberals.

Remember how personal income tax rates were supposedly the lowest in the country at one time?

Remember the user fee charges that were then applied to virtually anything you required from the provincial government?

Remember the pillaging of B.C. Hydro coffers, and the ICBC surplus account.

All the monies that are being paid out, and you want to cut off a major source of provincial income?

Sorry Andrew Wilkinson, please don’t try to sell this idea.

Bob Halliday
Sooke

PST pause would boost B.C. economy

The proposal from the B.C. Liberal leader to eliminate the PST for a year is an excellent way to stimulate the B.C. economy. It would encourage residents to spend more, and as such it would boost support for B.C. business.

Similarly, the federal government should also eliminate the GST for one year; that would significantly help the Canadian economy recover.

Roger Cyr
Victoria

Solo sailing comes with many risks

Re: "Victoria man's solo sailing trip around the world cut short by stroke," Sept. 22.

Reading the tragic events that took place during this latest solo sailing trip from Victoria reminded me of an incident about 50 years ago when I was chief mate on a freighter bound for Castries, St. Lucia.

The vessel was crossing the dark and moonless Caribbean Sea at about 15 knots when I took over the bridge watch from the second mate at 4 a.m. We were in the chartroom adjoining the wheelhouse, with the second mate indicating the vessel's position on the chart, while giving an estimated time of arrival at Castries later that morning.

There was a frantic yell from the watch-keeper on the bridge-wing lookout, and we rushed to see what he wanted.

An unlit yacht was passing down the starboard side of the vessel, so close that we could see a yachtsman climbing out onto his afterdeck from the cabin, where he had obviously been sleeping.

The yacht was mere feet away from being run over, and the second mate, the lookout and me joined in a chorus of foul Anglo-Saxon sailorman language to let him know what we thought of his utter lack of seamanship and sheer stupidity.

On a bulk-carrier about a dozen years later, I was involved in rescuing a lone yachtsman whose mast got damaged, and was adrift with no radio communication in the Gulf Stream off the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S.; our crew very probably saved that yachtsman's life after he set off an emergency flare when he saw us.

Every time I read about solo sailors, with the adoring media praise they always seem to receive, I think about that incident near St. Lucia 50 years ago where the freighter could easily have been involved in a death, which would likely have been on my conscience for the rest of my life.

Bernie Smith
Parksville

Free treatment better than free drugs

I have yet in my experience with addicts known them to get clean or sober when they are being enabled in their addiction. Maybe I'm wrong. I'm trying to picture it: "Oh, the government is going to deliver drugs free to me at my tent or hotel room. Geez, I'd better quit before that happens!"

I once heard a woman coming out of a safe injection site saying: "This is great. Now I can take as much as I want and I don't have to worry about OD'ing." So much for that as an inducement to get into recovery.

Enabling is not the answer. It has been proven in countries all over the world. I don't have a great solution to offer. I wish I did. But I would suggest that free treatment would be better than free drugs.

Launa Palset
Victoria

Happy 100th to Jack Knox's mom

Re: "My 100-year-old mother's lesson: We can endure," Jack Knox, Sept. 26.

Happy 100th birthday to Jack Knox's mother. Congratulations for this milestone, and also for having a son whose wit and humour continually enrich the pages of the Times Colonist!

Larry Licht
Victoria

Threats against provincial health officer are disgusting

In my 70 years, I have seldom been as disgusted as when I read about the threats to Dr. Bonnie. Are you kidding me — Dr. Bonnie?

Yeah, the punks, bullies and cowards who do such things are usually men who hide behind their troll-like gutlessness hiding in the murky shadows of their abject stupidity.

If anything, the pandemic has emphasized the number of wingnuts, dolts and charlatans that, unfortunately, exist in our society.

Yes, they are a minority, but they are dangerous.

A recent quote offered a point of view — “there are those among us who are too dumb to know they are ignorant.”

The anti-vaxxers, flat-world fanatics, science deniers and all the rest are tiresome, but also worrisome.

Their inability to think critically is a personal and community liability.

These people diminish our world.

I recently had an acquaintance tell me that she had read that there was no such thing as poverty anymore and a guy advised me that Black Lives Matter is a communist organization —“Hey man, you need to get educated. I have some websites for you to look at.”

Sigh.

I trust the those who are having a go at our beloved Dr. Bonnie are found, shamed and brought to justice.

Larry Leischner

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