

LARK HARBOUR

THE

YORK HARBOUR

# BLOW·ME·DOWNER

ABOUT THE OUTER BAY OF ISLANDS, NEWFOUNDLAND

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Editor: Stuart L Harvey

P.O. Box 17, Lark Harbour, NL, Canada, A0L 1H0

Tel: 709-681-2256

Email: [blowmedowner@gmail.com](mailto:blowmedowner@gmail.com)

Web Page: [www.blowmedowner.webs.com](http://www.blowmedowner.webs.com)

## ST JAMES SCHOOL, LARK HARBOUR, HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 2015



Photo courtesy of Joanne Sheppard

*Front Row, L-R* : Leah Callfas, Cheyanne Lushman, Monica Rotchford

*Middle* : Christian Payne, Dylan Larkin, Nicholas Skinner, Kennedy Sheppard, Courtney Pennell, Zachary Sheppard, Jonah Sheppard, Tyson Hoskins

*Back Centre* : Nathan Sheppard

St James All-Grade School, Lark Harbour, celebrated its 2015 High School Graduation on Friday 22 May. The celebrations began with a Service in St James Church, followed by a Dinner, a Presentation of Scrolls, and a Dance in the School Gymnasium. Congratulations to all the Graduates and their parents on this successful completion of a High School Education.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

LH = Lark Harbour YH = York Harbour JB = John's Beach  
 HC = Holy Communion MP = Morning Prayer EP = Evening Prayer  
 P&P = Prayer & Praise; HB = Baptism; MHS = Mem Hymn Sing

2015	JUNE	2015
7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sun</b> Pentecost 2 - 11:00am LH, MP; JB, 7:00pm, P&P	
14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sun</b> Pentecost 3 - 11:00am LH, HC; JB, 7:00pm, HC	
21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Sun</b> Fathers' Day - 7:00pm LH, HC; JB, 10:30am, HC	
28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sun</b> Pentecost 5 - 7:00pm LH, MHS; JB, 10:30am, MP	

2015	JULY	2015
1 <sup>st</sup>	Wed <b>CANADA DAY</b>	
5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sun</b> Pentecost 6 - 11:00am LH, HC; JB, 7:00am, HB, HC	
12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sun</b> Pentecost 7 - 11:00am LH, HC; - 2:30pm JB, Cemetery Flower Service	
19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sun</b> 2:00pm LH & 3:15pm YH, Cemetery Flower Services	
26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sun</b> Pentecost 9 - 7:00pm LH, EP; 10:30am JB, EP	

2015	AUGUST	2015
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**NO DATES HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FOR AUGUST**

### Card of Thanks

The family of the late Susan Forrest Swift Harvey of Lark Harbour, NL, wish to offer their sincere thanks to all those friends who, in the aftermath of the accident and tragic death of our dear Wife and Mother, sent cards and messages of sympathy and support, attended the Memorial Service on May 24<sup>th</sup>, and assisted us in so many important ways to deal with our grief.

Thanks also to the members of the Congregation of St James Church for your spiritual support, organist Sharon Parsons and the Choir members, Rev Nelson Chatman for his concerned ministry, Layreaders George Sheppard, Ruth Traverse, Lorraine Humber and Don Traverse, the ACW who provided refreshments after the Service, the Staff of Country Haven Funeral Home for their professionalism, and all others who in various ways offered help, sympathy and understanding.

You may never know how important your words and actions have been to us.

From Stuart,  
 children William, Margaret, and Frances,  
 their spouses Eileen, Kevin and Dean, and  
 grandchildren Juliet, Thomas, Susie and William.



IF YOU SPEND MUCH TIME ON THE INTERNET, the chances are that you have encountered an organisation called [AVAAZ](http://AVAAZ.ORG). It has been in existence for about 5 years, but I first discovered it only a couple of years ago. Since then I have participated frequently in its activities.

If you are in the habit, as I am, of dismissing most organisations, businesses, and fly-by-night salespersons that try to populate your screen with their logos and sales pitches, then you may have treated AVAAZ in the same way. But if so, please take a second look.

In its own words, "*Avaaz is a global web movement to bring people-powered politics to decision-making everywhere.*" That means for *US*, ordinary people who individually possess very little power or knowledge about how to change anything. But it is effective in what it does. The name 'AVAAZ' means "voice" in several languages spoken widely around the world, though not in English.

The way it works is simple. In 2014 AVAAZ organised a petition calling on the United Nations to encourage member nations to act on climate change. In September 400,000 people marched in New York City, and many thousands more in other places around the world. For those who were not able to take part in a march, there was [a petition to sign](#). All this received world-wide publicity. Eventually it took effect, and one result was that the USA and China both pledged to work on reducing carbon emissions. Many other countries then followed.

Other successful efforts by AVAAZ under its leader Ricken Patel have resulted in the release of political prisoners in various countries, and new legislation in countries where women's rights were ignored.

So AVAAZ is one way that we, "the little people", can make our voices heard effectively, causing world leaders to respond positively.

To find out more about AVAAZ, click on [this link](#) to learn about some of the important actions that the organisation has undertaken, some much smaller in scope, but still very important in the places where they occurred.

You need never again say anything like, "*Oh, I can't do anything to change the world!*" You certainly can, by joining in the people power AVAAZ makes available.

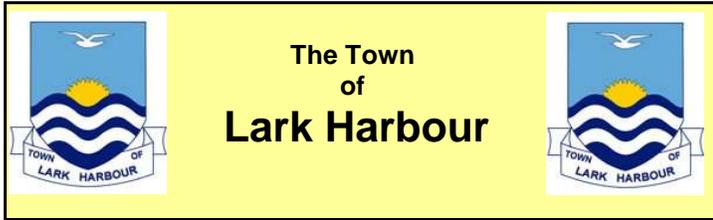
If you are concerned about human rights, poverty, governments that bully their citizens, big business that misuses its power to steal land for their own purposes, or even those 'democratic' ones like some recent Canadian governments that often ignore what their citizens want, then [check it out](#).

It's a good feeling when you read that a political prisoner in the Middle East has been released, or a remote tribe in South America has been protected against a logging company's theft of their land because of a petition *YOU* signed. It doesn't have to cost you anything. (AVAAZ does sometimes ask for donations, but, like signing the petitions, donating is also voluntary.)

And you never know, there may come a day when your life is threatened by something you can't change — but [AVAAZ](#) might.

[change.org](http://change.org) is a smaller organisation that works in the same way as AVAAZ. [Check this link](#) to see what Ken Donnelly and [change.org](#) are doing on a more local issue in Halifax, NS.

SLH



The Town  
of  
**Lark Harbour**

**Minutes of Regular Council Meeting of 2015 May 11**

*Present:*

Mayor – Jamie Park; Deputy Mayor – Jeremiah Barry  
Councillors – Dennis Sheppard, Rose Sheppard, Olivia Spurrell  
Clerks – Joanna Pottle (Recording Minutes)

Guest – Kerry Barry - Community Youth Network (CYN)

*Absent:*

Clerk – Peggy Sheppard

*Meeting commenced at 6:25 pm.*

- ! Community Youth Network Coordinator Kerry Barry participated in a discussion on an event to take place sometime in June. The Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band along with CYN will be hosting a smudging event. They are hoping to hold the event within the communities of Lark Harbour and York Harbour. Mr Barry will contact the Council Office when it is known where and when the event will take place.
- ! Approved: - Regular Council Meeting Minutes of 2015 April 20 Special Meeting Minutes of 2015 May 4.
- ! Water/Sewer Update: - No update has yet been received on Phase 2. Brief discussion held regarding the repairs needed to be made to the Gate. Councillors will visit site to see what needs to be done to fix the gate.
- ! Amalgamation: - A conference call will be taking place on 2015 May 27 to discuss Amalgamation with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and York Harbour Council.
- ! Viking Boat: - Letters have been sent to local contractors regarding the removal of the Viking Boat. In a last effort to save the boat, the Mayor made contact with the Department of Industry, Business, and Tourism to see if there is any funding available to make repairs to the boat since it is in deplorable condition. Agreed to wait two weeks to see if there is any funding available and to hold another discussion on this matter.
- ! Dilapidated Properties: - Letters sent to dilapidated property owners. Council will follow up in the near future.
- ! Oceans Day: - Clerk directed to contact the school and community members to seek any individuals who would be interested in providing some local entertainment for the event. Business owners in the communities will be contacted for a donation for the event. Motion made to help cover cost of food for the event up to a maximum of \$150.00.
- ! Acting Town Clerk Position: - Council reviewed resume received. Since clerks do not attend much training this time of year the topic will be postponed for discussion again in the fall.

- ! Tire Collection/Vehicle Wreck Removal: - The tire collection will be held during the first week of June if possible. Clerk directed to follow up on vehicle wreck removal.
- ! Route 450: - Clerk directed to write another letter to the Minister of Transportation and Works regarding Route 450 conditions.
- ! Financial Report approved with no accounts payable at this time.
- ! Building Permits all approved.
- ! Community Recreation Support Program: - Clerk directed to find out more information as to location and cost of a skating rink under the grant received in the amount of \$7,500.00. More discussion will take place before decision is made.
- ! By-Road Grading/Repairs to Beacon Road: - Councillors will inspect by-roads to see where fill is needed. All agreed to get by-road grading done.
- ! Fracking: - Public Consultations: Review of email regarding fracking consultations. Clerk directed to find out more information.
- ! Council viewed letter regarding dog complaint.
- ! Clerk directed to contact RCMP about policing problems in our area.
- ! Council reviewed letter from Northern911. All agreed to follow up on False Alarm System Bylaw.
- ! Council reviewed letter from child who is looking for badges. Letter to be sent to the Fire Department.
- ! Signs will be displayed at the playground/skate park area stating that no motorized vehicles are permitted in the area.

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**NEW PAGE**

**“FICTION”**

**ADDED  
TO BLOW•ME•DOWNER WEBPAGE**

I have recently added a new page called “FICTION” to my webpage. Presently it contains only one story, *THE EXILE*, but more will be added in the course of time.

To view the story simply click on this link:

[www.blowmedowner.webs.com](http://www.blowmedowner.webs.com)

and the page should open automatically in your PDF viewer.

If you have written any short stories, poems, etc, and would like to submit one of them, I will be happy to consider including one. It's all free of charge. Simply email your *proofed text to me with a statement that it is your own original work*. If it is suitable I will present it on the new BLOW•ME•DOWNER “FICTION” page, with your name withheld if you prefer.

## POLITICAL PARTY DONATIONS

2015 Jan - March

Numbers from Elections Canada

PARTY	DOLLAR AMOUNT	NR OF DONORS	DOLLARS PERDONOR
Conservative	6,302,917.51	41,161	153.13
Liberal	3,872,929.78	34,508	112.53
NDP	2,266,728.10	28,060	80.78
Green	670,521.71	10,354	64.76

Above are the figures as released by Elections Canada for total fundraising results in Jan, Feb & March 2015, by the four parties represented in the House of Commons.

In every category (dollar amount, number of donors, and average amount per donor) the **Conservatives** led, the **Liberals** came second, the **NDP** third, and the **Green Party** fourth. On the above chart, compare the figures.

What facts can be distilled from these numbers?

1. The average **Conservative donation** was **\$153.13**, while the average **Liberal donation** was **\$112.53**. This suggests that the average Conservative donor is either more wealthy or more generous than the average Liberal donor, or even the average donors to the other parties. Does this seem likely to you? If Conservatives think a non-Conservative government may be elected, they may donate more to prevent it. The figures may also indicate that they are wealthy enough to be able to donate more.
2. The Liberals raised 61% as much money as the Conservatives, from 84% as many people. This may suggest that Liberal donors are less wealthy than Conservatives, or that they are less generous than Conservatives. Does this seem likely to you?
3. **The NDP raised 36% as much money as the Conservatives from 68% as many donors, and 59% as much money as the Liberals from 36% as many donors.** Are they less wealthy than Conservative donors, or are they less generous? Which is true?

The numbers show that more Conservatives gave more money than the Liberals and the NDP combined. This suggests that **more Conservatives have more wealth to make larger donations than do Liberals and NDP combined.** If so we may be doomed to having Conservative governments in Canada for the foreseeable future.

This raises the question: **Why are the less affluent who form the majority of Canadians contented to sit back and allow the Harperites yet another election victory by default?**

It also raises a second question: **Why are the Liberals and the NDP, whose policies are quite similar in many ways, so determined NOT to co-operate to prevent another Conservative victory, again perhaps without a clear majority?**

According to Elections Canada, both the NDP and the Liberals have posted their best fundraising results in ten years, though they still lag the Conservatives. But together they could win.

Surely the Liberals and the NDP ought to be prepared to put partisanship aside long enough to prevent the re-election of a government that neither they nor a majority of Canadians wish to support. This would not be a coalition, although a coalition would be

an ideal solution, given the present run-down state of our democracy. Coalition governments often appear when a country lacks leadership, or when a system generates a multiplicity of new parties. These can be warning signals of an approaching crisis, and Canada seems to be moving steadily in that direction. If Harper is elected yet again, he may well have succeeded in changing our fair country beyond the point of no return, *which is his avowed intention.* SLH

## WHY NOT A COALITION?

**I**N THE 2011 GENERAL ELECTION IN CANADA a majority of voters did not support the Conservative Government under Stephen Harper. But because of the way the *Simple Majority*, or as it is also known, the *First-Past-the-Post* election system works, a government with a majority of seats, but not a majority of votes, is often elected. In 2011 more people voted for the NDP and the Liberals combined than for the Conservatives, but because more Conservatives were elected they formed the government. It is a system where *default* can often win the day. (See [BMD, April 2015, page 3](#))

This is not a fair system which should be changed, but since the present Federal government can use it to advantage, change is unlikely until a more democratically-minded government takes power.

So the only alternative is for the Opposition Parties to reach an agreement, so that together they can garner more votes than the Conservatives and elect more members. This has to be done through merging of policies and fielding only one candidate to represent both parties because, as we saw in 2011 in many ridings, if there are two, then neither one is successful.

The problem lies in the fact that the non-Conservative vote is split between the Liberal and NDP candidates in the riding, thus allowing the Conservative candidate to “come up the middle”. But if the two Opposition Parties field only one joint candidate, then this candidate could garner most votes and would be elected.

However it seems that the Opposition Parties cannot agree on this. Instead, they stubbornly refuse to work together, leaving a clear field for the Conservatives who are gleefully laughing up their sleeves. Apparently Liberals and NDPers are so strongly attached to their separate policy platforms that they cannot modify them even slightly to accommodate each other.

But with honest consultation between the two parties, they ought to be able to arrive at a compromise acceptable to both, to allow Liberal and NDP voters to support a joint candidate where necessary. It is true that they may lose a few votes of the diehard party faithful, but those votes would not significantly affect the outcome in any ridings except those where the result is close and may be swung by what is relatively a very small number of votes.

Why is there so much resistance to a Coalition anyway? I would much rather see more “small L” liberal policies being implemented, than more ultra-conservative ones which are the choice of less than half of the electorate. Is it that the bulk of the electorate falls for the misleading advertising on TV, advertising often claiming to be non-partisan, but which is questionably funded by our tax dollars?

But until such time as we have a government that does not force its policies through Parliament by limiting debate, or by hiding its ideological policies in the verbiage of omnibus bills, we are unlikely to see truly representative elections. The Harper leadership has shown minimal regard for Parliamentary procedure when it is in their interest to ignore it, so the Opposition must find legal but perhaps unconventional measures to compete effectively. SLH

## Obituary

**MARY ENA SACREY**  
1937 October 31 - 2015 May 3

Passed peacefully away at Corner Brook Long Term Care Home on Sunday, May 3, 2015 at the age of 77 years, Mary Ena Sacrey (née Sheppard) of Lark Harbour.



She leaves to mourn with fond and loving memories sons: Ben (Wanda) and Francis (Annette), Lark Hr; daughter Brenda (Bernie), Agassiz, BC; sisters: Margaret and Ann (Fred); brothers: Gideon (Lesley), George (Elizabeth), Herb (Kay), and Eric (Judy); grandchildren Krystle (Steve), Christopher (Katie), Sean, Johnny (Holly), Christina (Derek), Arianna and Faith; great-grandchildren: Isaiah "Lukey", Zander, Charlie, Dax and Cassie; sisters-in-law: Lorraine, Cecilia, and Jeannette; brothers-in-law: John, Alex, and Ray; as well as a large circle of nieces & nephews, other relatives and friends.

She was predeceased by husband Max, parents George and Dorcas Sheppard, brother John, grandson Peyton, sister-in-law Marilyn, brothers-in-law Brymer and Walter.

Visitation will take place at St James Anglican Church in Lark Harbour on Monday 7-9pm and Tuesday 2-4 & 7-9pm, from where the funeral service will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2015 at 2:00pm, with Reverend Nelson Chatman officiating. Interment to follow at St James Anglican Cemetery.

As expressions of sympathy, flowers are graciously accepted or donations may be made to the charity of one's choice. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Country Haven Funeral Home. The family guest book may be signed by visiting [www.country-haven.ca](http://www.country-haven.ca).

*"Forever In Our Hearts"*

## Obituary

**GORDON CHARLES GILBERT**  
1941 March 14 - 2015 May 08

It is with great sadness that the family of the late Gordon Gilbert announce his passing on Friday, May 8th 2015 from the Western Memorial Regional Hospital in Corner Brook at the age of 74 years.

He leaves to mourn with fond and loving memories his wife Patricia, sisters and brothers: Beatrice (Freeman) Pennell, Raleigh Gilbert, Terry (Barb) Gilbert, Joanne (Graham) Sheppard, brothers and sisters in law: Gus (Loretta) Keough, Leonard (Sylvia)



## Keough, Wayne Obituary

**ELIZA PHYLLIS GILBERT**  
1922 October 31 - 2015 May 16

It is with sadness that the family of Phyllis Gilbert announce her passing at the Evergreen Home for Special Care in Kentville, Nova Scotia. She leaves to mourn with fond and loving memories her children: Gerald (Leona) Lark Harbour, Madeline Bartlett (Carl) New Minas, NS, Norman (Linda) Calgary, AB, Ivan (Carol) Lark Harbour, Lee (Lois) New Minas, NS, Roy (Winnie) Lark Harbour, 19 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren children, 1 great-great grandchild, sister Irene, sisters-in-law Genosene, Maisie, brother-in-law Phillip, and a large circle of family and friends.



She was predeceased by her husband Cyril, brothers Clyde and Garfield and special aunt Dorcas. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Fillatre's Funeral Home.

Visitation will take place on Tuesday at 7-9, Wednesday at 2-4, and 7-9 at St James Anglican Church, Lark Harbour. Funeral will take place on Thursday, May 21st at 2:00pm with Reverend Nelson Chatman officiating, interment to follow at St James Cemetery. Flowers are graciously accepted or donations may be made to St James Anglican Church Memorial Fund or a charity of one's choice.

*"Forever In Our Hearts"*

We offer our sincere condolences to the friends and families of the bereaved, assuring them that our thoughts and prayers are with them during this sad time of loss of their loved ones.

Keough, Madonna (Gary) Robson, Olive (Martin) Hepditch, nieces and nephews: Julia, Murray, Brenda, Colleen, Cory, Jaqueline, Sherry, Joe, Susan, Tracey, Duane, Jamie, Ivan, Steven and Krystal, as well as a large circle of great nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends.

He was predeceased by his parents: Wesley and Mary Gilbert. Friends may visit St James Anglican Church in Lark Harbour on Sunday 7-9Ppm and Monday 2-4 and 7-9pm from where the funeral service will be held on Tuesday, May 12th at 2pm with Rev Nelson Chatman officiating. Interment to follow at the Anglican Cemetery.

As expressions of sympathy flowers are graciously accepted or donations may be made to the St James Anglican Church Fund. Funeral arrangements entrusted to Fillatre's Funeral Home, Corner Brook, NL. The family guest book may be signed by visiting [www.fillatre.ca](http://www.fillatre.ca).

*"Forever In Our Hearts"*

## Editorial

**IMPLICATIONS OF ALBERTA'S  
SURPRISING ELECTION OF 2015**

IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE the Canadian province that you thought was the least likely to turf out a Progressive Conservative government and replace it with an NDP one, then Alberta would almost certainly be your choice. But after 44 years of very prosperous times under Tory rule, that is exactly what happened:

	NDP	WildRose	PC	Lib	Alberta
before	4	5	70	5	0
after	53	21	10	1	1

The political pundits have of course been talking about it, whether it might be an omen to predict the fate of other governments that have been in place for several elections, an example being the jaded present Federal Government under Stephen Harper, and, locally, the equally jaded PC government in Newfoundland & Labrador.

There are reasons behind an electorate's rejection of a particular government that may well be applicable to the government of another province or even a country. Factors such as the lack of a charismatic leader, or a paucity of new ideas, or even a mere perception among the electorate that this government is ignoring something important like the economy, or deteriorating medical services, may be sufficient to spell disaster for a government. This may have been the feeling in Alberta, exacerbated by the sudden drop in the price of oil, that led to the decisive demise of the PC government under Jim Prentice.

Many of the same conditions are present in the N&L political scene at this time. The drop in oil prices has drastically reduced government revenues causing the Davis PC government to react by cutting back in a number of areas and increasing the HST by 2%. But such tax increases naturally reduce spending, particularly on bigger items such as homes, cars, and larger appliances, removing money from the community and starting a downward spiral that spreads through the entire economy. Imagine if you were planning to buy a new refrigerator, for example. You have selected a fridge priced at \$1,000, plus HST at 13%, totalling \$1,130, and you have the money set aside to pay for it. Then the Government suddenly increases the HST to 15%. Your new fridge will now cost you 2% more, for a total of \$1,150, which is \$20 more than you expected. Not a lot, perhaps, but when applied also to other items such as clothes, or furniture, entertainment, restaurant meals, you may then decide to buy a cheaper fridge, or get the old one repaired and make it last longer. Everything you buy (except food and a few other items) will now cost you more on the HST, so you may have to cut back on other things too. Imagine the effect such a tax increase can have on very large items such as cars, although the effect on sales of luxury cars will be less than on lower priced vehicles because the wealthy will still be able to buy their expensive imports and eat in fancy restaurants. But when millions of ordinary people feel the increases, the decreased spending causes loss of jobs and in turn reduces the tax collected by government, and eventually the national economy will begin to spiral downwards.

If the government were to use whatever cash is realised from the 2% increase in HST to create new jobs, then the negative effect might be reduced, but generally the proceeds gained from such tax increases during a recession are comparatively minimal.

Increases in *across-the-board income tax*<sup>1</sup> will have a similar effect, especially on those with lower earnings who have relatively little *disposable income*<sup>2</sup>, but graduated tax rates for the more wealthy who do have significant disposable income will be less damaging to the economy. A graduated tax surcharge beginning with those with annual incomes of, for example, \$100,000 or more, will cause less distress in the economy.

If the reason for Alberta's rejection of its Progressive Conservative government was that the electorate believed that PC measures to counteract the recession would only make a bad scene worse, while policies being brought forward by the federal NDP opposition were the right way to go, then this may suggest a fundamental change in popular thinking likely to produce similar results federally in a fall election. This would not bode well for the Harper Conservatives who to date have concentrated on expenditure reduction to the detriment of every other aspect of fiscal policy.

The only policies they have brought forward have tended to be tax cuts or measures that will benefit upper income families while ignoring or even penalising those with middle and lower incomes. The Conservatives' income-splitting promise and their plan to increase contribution room for Tax Free Savings Accounts both fall directly into that category, as neither one fits the situations of most lower and middle income families who do not have surplus income to invest or salaries to benefit from income splitting. This was pointed out by the late Finance Minister Jim Flaherty when they were suggested to him. Both are typical conservative schemes roundly rejected by NDP and Liberals alike.

In contrast, NDP and Liberals have both proposed to increase investment on infrastructure, health services and education, all of which will provide *positive* growth in the labour force in the fields of health, education and the construction industry with its huge spin-off effect. These have been much neglected in recent government initiatives, but if given the necessary funding they will provide a healthier and more employable citizenry and a stronger economy. Cutbacks, although they may save us from incurring debt in the short run, will not facilitate a healthy economy in the more distant future and will require even more costly financing the longer the cutbacks remain in effect. It is true that we will have to borrow to finance spending, but compare it to your home. If you don't repair it, what will happen? Eventually it will be worthless and uninhabitable. If Canada does not modernise and improve its infrastructure, then the country will continue to fall behind the rest of the world as it has been doing over the last decade since Harper took over. That situation must be changed, and soon.

SLH

## ENDNOTES

1. Income tax levied equally on all levels of income.
2. Income that is available after all essential items such as food, clothing and shelter have been paid for.

*Election results quoted from [Alberta general election, 2015](#), in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.*

Editorial

## THERE'S NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

IT'S ABOUT TWO GENERATIONS AGO since the integrating of children with special learning needs into classes with so-called "normal" children (i.e. those who exhibit no special learning needs) began in classrooms, and the debate continues to this day. In theory the concept was a good one, as ideally it could enable those children who previously were segregated, to join the main stream — a move that should, if properly executed, benefit everybody, especially those most affected.

As is so often the case, however, the move was not supported by adequate provision of assistance for those children it was intended to benefit. Instead of receiving the help of a teacher specially trained to assist them, those children were frequently relegated to being helped by a parent or another student selected from the "normal" learners in the class or even left to their own devices with some kind of game. Many parents, for work or other reasons, could not be available as unpaid teacher aides, and the students who were assigned the responsibility should really have been assigned enrichment tasks to benefit themselves. In short, adequate funding was not provided to accommodate the special needs children, and their integration became yet another task the regular classroom teacher had to address in whatever way was possible.

Historically, all children of both sexes and similar age were taught in the same classroom situation except in some RC and other school systems where the sexes were segregated, but that is another issue.

During the more prosperous years of the later decades of the 1900s, various specialist teachers were introduced into schools. These included music, art, physical education, and in larger high schools teachers with specific degrees in the sciences, English, industrial arts and foreign languages. All these teaching positions depended on enrolment, and when a school's enrolment declined, so did the number of teachers. Teachers with Special Education degrees were also introduced at that time, based on a formula accounting for "special needs" children who were usually taught in segregated classes. At the same time, the concept of individualised programming for all students was introduced, based on the concept that every child is an individual and should therefore ideally have his/her own tailor-made program. However the key word was "*ideally*" and in most practical situations outside of model schools, large schools, and perhaps fee-paying private institutions, classroom situations did not change much.

For a while this system prevailed. School systems did what they could, given the restrictions imposed by class sizes and staff allocations, but practical considerations prevailed, of course. A teacher may sometimes have been able to tailor the learning experiences for two or three groups in a class, but rarely for each individual student in a class of 25 or more. So while the theory was wonderful, the practice changed only a little. The system was, as it always will be, hampered by the more limited ability of an average teacher who was often expected to run a class the way a gifted teacher might.

As time progressed and parents became more conscious of the needs of their children, those who could began to supplement the school effort by providing their children with extracurricular tutoring at their own expense. The wheel has now turned full circle and, as

many parents of special needs children have discovered, if they want individualised educational provision for their children, which should be their right, they will have to provide most of it *after school*, out of their own pockets, in the same way as music, dancing, gymnastics and a myriad of other skills are taught. Governments are using economic difficulties as a reason for unloading their responsibilities onto parents who in many cases are those least able to pay the bill. In small communities like ours it may even be difficult to find people with the necessary skills to take on such work that by rights should be a part of the school system, for which we all pay taxes.

This question, as faced by schools and by those whose children are in the school system, is just one aspect of government's shirking of its responsibilities. Certainly there is a shortage of funds, but when we have governments that use money from public taxation to advertise what are essentially their own partisan interests, then we have a right to demand control. Is it not more important to provide appropriate educational services for our children than to spend millions on public announcements that everyone either already knows about or can obtain information about, from their local employment office or even from their trade union? Is it not more important to provide for our children than to build megaprisons which most experts agree are not needed in our environment of falling crime statistics?

So many important services have been neglected for a decade or more now, and funding is urgently needed. Education, like our infrastructure shortfall, needs increased support from government, whether it be federal, provincial, or municipal. And the funds for these services must be provided from federal, provincial, or municipal sources. The federal source is the one best able to pay, so why should it not provide more support for provincial needs like education? The future of Canada is at stake, and wherever funding is to be found, we have a right to claim it for the services we consider important.

The People, not the oil industry, or any other industry, alone are our nation. Education at all levels may be the most important service our nation has and needs.

*There's nothing new under the sun: our future is our children.*

SLH

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Teachers are aware of the needs of the children with whom they work. Those needs must be nurtured and protected with all the means at our disposal because, unlike our physical needs of food, clothing, shelter, medicine and protection, once lost, they require at least a generation to be replaced.

In our upcoming federal and provincial elections, we as voters must ensure that those we elect are aware of these needs. We must insist that they listen to what we as a people tell them and that they act decisively on our wishes.

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Take a look at this [time-lapse video of snow in Corner Brook](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/time-lapse-shows-this-winter-s-massive-snowfall-in-corner-brook-1.3089374) during the last winter, January 7 to May12.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/time-lapse-shows-this-winter-s-massive-snowfall-in-corner-brook-1.3089374>

Time laps photography is always fascinating, but this one absolutely beats anything. Winter, coming and going in a few seconds! Too bad it doesn't, hey?

## REVIEW OF

**Title:** The Book of Negroes

**Author:** Lawrence Hill

**Publisher:** Harper Collins Canada, 2007, 470 pages; 486 pages with “A note on history”, “For Further Reading”, etc. \$24.95.

It has often been said that Truth is stranger than Fiction. If you need proof of this statement then all you need do is to read Lawrence Hill’s powerfully gripping novel, *The Book of Negroes*. While many books have been written examining the character of evil — Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness* (1899) for example — few have become classic depictions of the nadir of man’s inhumanity to man. However *The Book of Negroes* may well aspire to this.

The novel begins with Aminata Diallo, an aging black woman who was captured at the age of 11 in her native African village and transported as a slave to North Carolina. Fortunate that she had the opportunity to learn to read and write, she has written her own account of her life as a slave. At the opening of the novel she is in London, an old woman surrounded by British abolitionists as she is awaiting an audience with King George III and Queen Charlotte Sophia. The novel then reverts to Aminata’s childhood, capture and transportation from her African village to North America, undergoing some of the most horrific and debilitating experiences ever depicted in English literature.

The writing is consistently powerful but sparse, and one never feels that Mr Hill has over-stressed his subject matter, the evil and shameful aspects of slavery. The reader emerges at the end of the novel with a feeling of *catharsis* that ought to prevent any more occurrences of what must, like the Holocaust, go down in history as one of man’s most inhumane treatments ever of his fellow human beings.

One of the most vivid and powerful scenes occurs near the end of the book when Aminata, in her youth branded with a hot iron by her captors, confronts William Armstrong, second-in-command of the Bance Island slave holding fort, with her own personal proof that, despite his positive denial, branding was in fact done to slaves:

*Blood rose to Armstrong’s face and he stepped back. “Two letters,” he said quietly. “Do you know what they represent?” “It’s a G and an O,” I said. “Never knew what they meant.” “Grant, Oswald,” he said, his voice flat and emotionless . . . “What?”*

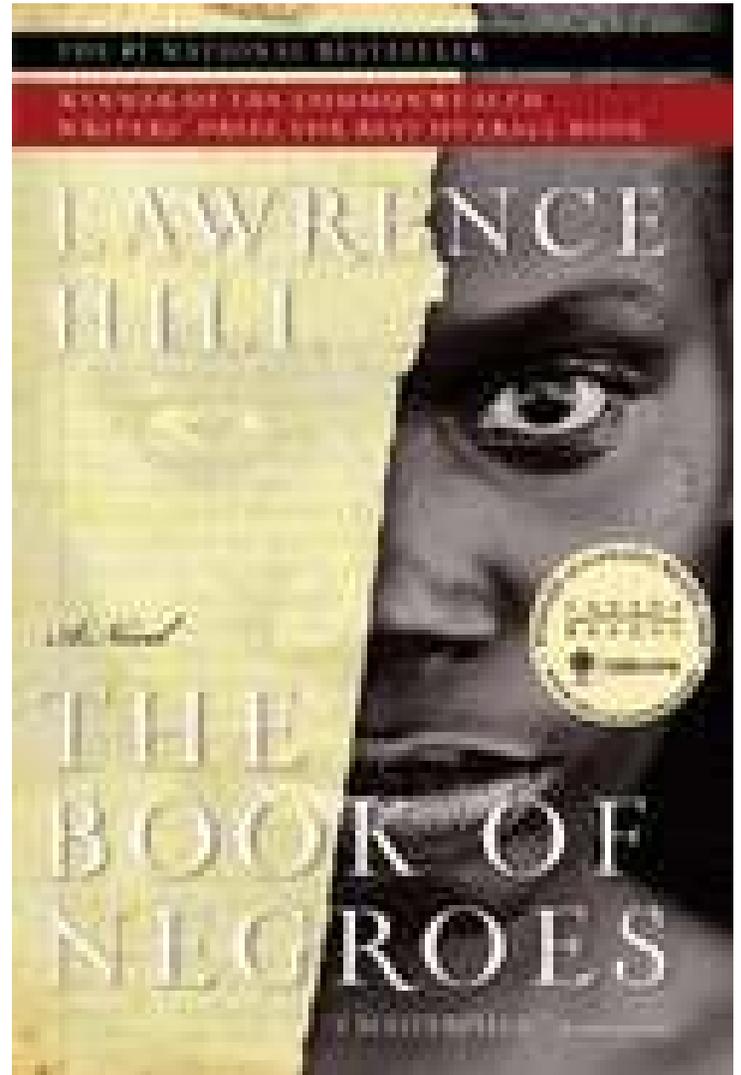
*“The company that runs Bance Island. Grant, Oswald. Richard Oswald is a Scotsman. This is his company. His associates —”*

*William Armstrong retreated to his chair, sat down and stretched his hand over his brow. I let him sit quietly for a moment while I turned away and did up the buttons and the clasp of my dress. And then I took three steps in his direction, looking straight into his eyes.*

*“You have no idea what I have lived through. Every waking moment is a nightmare for the captives you hold right now, on the other side of these stone walls. You have no idea what they will endure, if they will even survive on the ships, no idea of the thousands of humiliations and horrors waiting at their destinations.”*

*“Some things are better not to think about,” he said.*

*“Tell that to your captives,” I said.*



*The Book of Negroes* actually does exist as a real official historical document, written over 200 years ago. It contains the names of some three thousand black slaves who were living in what became the United States of America in 1776. *The Book* was a list of individuals most of whom were shipped northwards to Canada, especially Nova Scotia, where they were ultimately given a kind of freedom under the law. However in practical terms many former slaves gained little and still remained unquestionably as second class citizens. The descendants of many of them still live in that region.

The novel is a blend of history and fiction, a tighter and more personalised blend than is usual in historical fiction. It even reads like true history, simply because so much of it is precisely that. It is not always an easy book to read, since it illustrates very clearly and graphically what happened to so many of the black people who were wrenched from their native African homes and brought to a new country that viewed them as it viewed its cattle and other possessions, as simply another piece of property to serve the whim of its owner.

Read the book and learn about one of history’s most shameful episodes which still influences today’s North American urban environment when it sends periodic shivering echoes down through the underground tunnels of time.

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