

A POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE NEAR FUTURE

Let the Mouse and the Elephant coexist in harmony



On 2016 January 12, Tuesday, President Barack Obama of the United States presented his State of the Union Address. Every US president does this annually, and this is Mr Obama's eighth and last such speech. His presidency terminates a little less than a year from now, and as this is already his second term of office, he is not eligible to run again.

President Obama's seven years in office have been difficult for anyone with a middle-of-the-road political outlook — middle-of-the-road by Canadian standards, but leftish for an American politician. He has faced fierce opposition on many of the initiatives he introduced, including universal health care, climate action, and gun control; and Republican opposition necessitated modification of much intended legislation if it was to survive at all. Even with such modification, the survival of many of those initiatives will be uncertain if Obama is replaced by a Republican in the election of November 2016.

The President took this opportunity to remind the American people that the measures he has introduced over the past seven years should be supported "because they are the right thing to do," a phrase he repeated many times during his speech, and one that many Canadians can relate to.

For the first time, one of Obama's potential Republican successors, Donald Trump, is politically at least as far right as an American presidential candidate has been in recent years, so far right that he makes Stephen Harper look like a pinko socialist! In fact, much of his platform is reminiscent of some of Stephen Harper's platform that, ironically, helped Canadian voters who have never liked Harper, prevent a fourth Conservative victory in Canada. Most political commentators generally seem to be of the opinion that Trump is unlikely to be elected, but recent elections in Canada have produced some surprise results, and Trump could perhaps be one more surprise on the American side of the border. Trump seems to be doing well in the US polls at the moment, but the election is still nine months away and much can change before then. The Iowa "caucuses", a kind of candidate selection process totally different from anything we have in

Canada, have put Trump in second place, 4% behind Ted Cruz for the Republican nomination in Iowa. But that is only one state's nomination process, and all the remaining states have to go through their procedures before the Republican candidate for President is actually chosen.

If Donald Trump does receive the national nomination as Republican presidential candidate and is eventually elected as President, one has to conjecture what effect it would have on Canada. A President Donald Trump, in office from January 2017 until 2021, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in office as PM at least from late 2015 until 2019, they would be contemporary governing neighbours for at least two years as different as chalk and cheese. It would even be possible that both could then be elected for a second term four years from now. Stephen Harper and Barack Obama would in contrast look like blood brothers. (Click [here](#) for further information.)

Combine such circumstances with the fact that at the moment the US economy seems to be going ahead pretty well compared with ours, which is stumbling along, not well situated to pursue the independent economy we might desire. It is a sad prospect for us, but by 2020 North America could have taken on a very different appearance, and Stephen Harper may be seen smugly laughing up his sleeve.

An alternative possibility, given the failure of Donald Trump's aspirations and instead the election of Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders, as the next American President, could present a very different scenario. Justin Trudeau, with his customary charm and his successful so far into the world of international politics, could result in a Canada-USA partnership where North America could grow into what might amount to almost a coalition, with the vastly different spectacle of two separate countries working together in hitherto unprecedented harmony: a pipe dream perhaps, but imagine the benefits that could accrue.

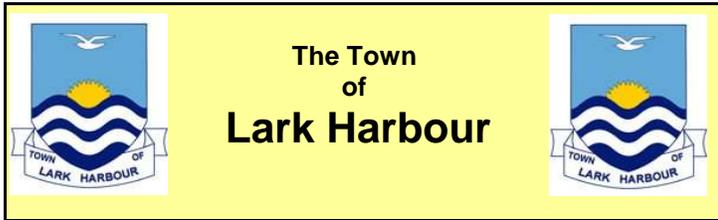
We know fairly well the kind of USA that will exist under Hillary Clinton as President — not much change from now. But if Bernie Sanders succeeds, we may be looking at a very different USA. The 74-year-old Mr Sanders is the closest to a socialist Presidential candidate Americans have ever seriously considered. He is widely described as 'socialist', a term that has traditionally been anathema to Americans, but he seems content to be so described. If he is elected, the USA may change beyond all recognition.

Of course, there are many 'what-ifs' to be resolved during the next year, and uncertainty seems to be a dominant element in present day world politics. But a truly harmonious relationship between two countries so geographically close and with so many common interests would indeed be a welcome relief in a world where strife and irrationality seem to hold sway.

If we could at least *hope* that such a situation could result over the next year with Justin Trudeau and Barack Obama (his term finishes in January 2017) finding increasing opportunities for bi-national co-operation, maybe such a pipe dream could become a reality, dispelling our fears of the Canadian Mouse being crushed to death by the American Elephant. A new continental order might then develop.

Is it too much to hope for? With the appropriate political will on both sides at least some of it might have the potential to become reality. And any move in that direction in this strife-torn world would be more than welcomed by most of us.

SLH



REPORT ON THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF DECEMBER 2015

Present: Mayor Jamie Park
 Deputy Mayor Olivia Spurrell
 Councillors: Rose Sheppard, Dennis Sheppard,
 Melanie Joyce
 Clerk Peggy Sheppard (Recording Minutes)

Absent Clerk Joanna Pottle

Meeting commenced at 6:30 pm.

- ! The newest Council member Melanie Joyce was sworn in. The Oath of Affirmation was signed.
- ! Regular meeting minutes of 2015 November 17 and Special Meeting of 2015 November 25 approved.
- ! Water/Sewer Update: Clerk directed to follow up with Anderson Engineering Ltd. regarding repairs to the fish ladder. Application for Phase 2 funding has been submitted to the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.
- ! Playground Upgrades: All agreed to proceed with the skating rink. Councillor Dennis obtained quotes for additional equipment as discussed. The cheapest place to order from is Costco. Clerk directed to check on cost of business membership at Costco. A motion was made to purchase the skating rink kit from RinkMaster.
- ! Crown Land Applications: Clerk Peggy left meeting during this discussion due to conflict of interest. A motion was made to approve Crown Land Applications. Clerk directed to contact applicants. Applications not to be picked up until Friday, December 18th, 2015.
- ! Devils Head: Clerk to send letter to DMIA requesting approval to obtain this surplus property. Review of quotes received. Clerk directed to submit quotes to DFO.
- ! Dilapidated properties: Council will send one more notice to owners of dilapidated property. Clerk to contact Department of Environment. Discussion on significant arrears of one property. Agreed to follow up with court proceedings.
- ! Budget 2016: A motion to amend the budget as previously adopted.
- ! Financial Report: Approved with accounts payable of \$2,388.04.

- ! Building Permits: All approved as listed.
- ! Write offs: Clerk directed to contact DMIA regarding poll tax write off request.
- ! Fire Hall Upgrades: Discussion on upgrades currently on-going. Clerk directed to get clarification on financial status of project. A motion was made to purchase glasboard. Will hire drywaller/plasterer to complete necessary inside work.
- ! Complaint received regarding dirt bikes in the Town. Clerk directed to contact RCMP and reply to complainant.
- ! Discussion on Christmas parade to be held on Saturday, December 12th. Annual Christmas Tree Lighting to be held on Wednesday, December 9th.
- ! Clerk will receive 2 hours pay when called to Town Hall to reset the alarm system.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

DUTCH POLICE TRAIN EAGLES TO SNATCH ENEMY DRONES

by Toby Sterling, Rotterdam Nederlands Politie

Since drones, those fascinating little remote-controlled flying devices which not long ago were the sole domain of the military or the very wealthy, have now become priced within the reach of most ordinary people, they have begun to be a safety hazard. This is especially around airports where they can endanger aircraft landing or taking off, but they can also threaten individual privacy.

Regulations have been introduced, but they are difficult for the authorities to enforce. Various methods of preventing their use, including netting them, and shooting them down, have been tried, but none of these methods are very effective, and some present as much danger as do the drones themselves. However the Netherlands police have come up with a surprising, unique and successful method: they are using trained eagles to catch them, and apparently the eagles are very effective.

Who would have thought that [the ancient medieval sport of falconry](#) would be able to compete so effectively with modern state-of-the-art technology?

Read about how it works in this illustrated article.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/us-dutch-police-drones-idINKCN0VB136>

Have you seen the new tourist advertisements this year for Newfoundland & Labrador? For those of us who don't care for many of the media-vaunted tourist destinations of the world, one advertisement really hits the spot. It concludes with the words:

Newfoundland & Labrador . . . It's about as far from Disney World as you can get.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Click on the blue links to read the original items

[HEARTWARMING MOMENT SHOWS GOOD SAMARITAN HELPING A HOMELESS MAN](#)

By Leeanna Maclean, Digital Reporter, 2016 January 11

Much, if not most, of today's news seems to be negative — terrorism, violence, prejudice, intolerance, wars, crime, weather and other natural disasters — so that when a report about a positive event appears, it often gets pushed to the back of the bigger unpleasant items and is missed by most of us. This little item appeared online, and it was a positive, human, caring act by one person for another. Click on the blue link to read about it.

URL:

<http://www.theweathernetwork.com/news/articles/heartwarming-moment-shows-good-samaritan-helping-homeless/62152>

[THE WORLD'S POOREST HOUSEHOLDS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A MOBILE PHONE THAN A TOILET](#)

By Lily Kuo, in Quartz

A somewhat surprising fact, but it is based on information from a report titled *Digital Dividends* by the World Bank.

<http://qz.com/594455/the-worlds-poorest-households-are-more-likely-to-have-a-mobile-phone-than-a-toilet/>

[CREATE BIODIVERSITY IN YOUR YARD WITH THESE TIPS](#)

By Mark Cullen, in Green Spaces, 2016 Jan 16

Many people believe that plants other than trees and flowers they have intentionally planted in their gardens have no place there. But concern for the survival of insects and other forms of life that are key to the pollination of most plants, including those we depend on for food, is forcing us to change our attitude.

Mark Cullen, a professional horticulturist, advances this view. If you agree, read his article and try some of his suggestions, and you may be surprised at the result, as well as feeling satisfied with your decision to contribute to the survival of many endangered species that are essential to our own life on earth. Unless we stop forcing nature to conform to our wishes, we are likely to end up with a world that we really do not want, and which will be unable to support our own lives.

Mr Cullen makes this statement: "Within a generation, the average Canadian garden will have little to do with the plant collections and formal, clipped and manicured gardens made popular after the Second World War."

URL:

<http://www.thestar.com/life/homes/2016/01/16/create-biodiversity-in-your-yard-with-these-5-tips.html>

[EVERY EMPLOYEE'S DREAM? UNLIMITED VACATION TIME](#)

By Gillian Shaw, Vancouver Sun, 2016 January 15

Is it really something everyone wants? Is it possible? Is it actually happening anywhere? Read the article and find out. You may be surprised.

URL:

http://www.vancouversun.com/business/unlimited+vacation+time+builddirect+employees/11655517/story.html?_lsa=9bd9-cbfe

[ITALIAN WOMAN ASKS FOR HELP FROM FIREFIGHTERS AFTER LOSING KEYS TO HER CHASTITY BELT](#)

By Alice Philipson, Daily Telegraph, London, 2016 Jan 17

Sometimes you think there can't be anything more ridiculous to happen anywhere, but then something turns up that reinforces your faith in the originality of human nature. Remember the item about the American Republican Assemblywoman whose family had a [Christmas card](#) printed to send to their friends? It showed every one of them, from a 5-year-old to the grandparents, all toting guns. Only in America, you say?

Well, this story involves an Italian lady. She arrived at a fire station and asked firefighters to help her with a lock she could not open because she had misplaced her key. It's easy to misplace your car keys or accidentally lock them in your car, and you might call your local fire department for assistance. I'm sure that has happened to most of us at one time or another. But this event is surely in a class of its own.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/12104288/Italian-woman-asks-for-help-from-firefighters-after-losing-keys-to-her-chastity-belt.html>

[MANITOBA'S FIRST FEMALE BACKHOE OWNER HAS ADVICE FOR OTHER WOMEN: 'JUST DO IT.'](#)

CBC Radio, DNTO, Friday 2015 January 01

And why not? This lady, five foot five tall and with bright pink hair, had the courage of her convictions, and just went ahead and did what she had wanted to do for years. She was working in a clothing store, and she wanted to do something different, so she went out and did it. More women should make decisions like this, instead of resigning themselves to a job they really don't want to do.

Click on the link to read more about Jacquie McDonald and to see her at the controls of the John Deere backhoe she bought for herself. She is now a licenced machine operator.

URL:

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/dnto/just-get-the-thing-done-and-let-them-howl-nellie-mcclung-1.3418924/manitoba-s-first-female-backhoe-owner-has-advice-for-other-women-just-do-it-1.3423908>

THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY REQUIEM FOR A CLASS FACING EXTINCTION



Chatsworth House, Edensor, Derbyshire, England

THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY has often been a source of entertainment and even mockery for many of us. Consider, for example, ‘Pedalling Pete’, the squire of a small estate near where I grew up in north-eastern England. He lived in a house that was a mansion by our standards, and his source of income was the rental of farms that he owned in the area. He did not work on the farms at all himself: instead he collected rent from the farmers who leased the farms, a relic of the age-old system of feudal land occupancy that existed throughout Europe since the early Medieval period.

He was nicknamed Pedalling Pete because of his unique practice during his business trips by train to London, when he might be seen lying on his back on the floor of the carriage compartment, his legs waving in the air, as if he was riding a bicycle.

And just in case you think Pedalling Pete was the only such member of the minor aristocracy that we disrespectful young urchins made fun of, I can assure you there were others. Because the ladies of the aristocracy always wore skirts in those days, even when they went horseback riding, they were unable to ride astride the horse and instead they rode ‘side saddle’, using a special saddle that accommodated both legs on one side of the horse’s back: far from an ideal riding position, but any other was considered unladylike in those times, even as recently as the 1950s when I was growing up.

There were many farms in our area, with fields separated by fences or hedgerows to keep the cattle out of the grain or produce, with gates at intervals, always closed, but allowing access by tractor or horse and cart from one field to another. One day my friend and I were out for a hike in the fields around our village, when in the distance we saw a middle-aged lady on horseback approaching us. We had just passed through one of those gates which we had carefully closed behind us, when the lady, now close to us, called out, “Oh, you boys, open that gate for me so that I do not have to dismount.” No use of “please” or other politeness: only a peremptory command, which we ignored. “You boys, open that gate,” she repeated. We ignored her.

Not all the landowners and wives were so ignorant. In fact, it tended to be the more minor ones who considered themselves so much better than we were, while the wealthier ones were invariably polite and often quite friendly. My friend and I felt no compunction to help this woman at all, and as we looked back she had dismounted and was opening the gate herself.

If you have watched any episodes of *Downton Abbey* on PBS tv, you will be familiar with the invisible barrier between the ‘family’ and their household staff. You can also watch the gradual breakdown of those barriers at Downton. Such barriers are almost gone now, but when I was a boy, they were still very much in place.

One of the world famous “stately homes” of England is located in Derbyshire in themidlands, northwest of London. It is a magnificent house with some 200 plus rooms surrounded with acres of finely manicured gardens, a lake, and a spectacular fountain fed from a lake atop the surrounding mountains. It is the ancestral home of the Dukes of Devonshire, not Derbyshire, as you might expect, and this discrepancy results from a clerical error made at the time the lands were granted by the king.

Again, like Downton Abbey, Chatsworth House contains hundreds of works of art accumulated over the centuries, but has fallen on hard times in the last century. The present owners of Chatsworth have opened their home to the public who can visit and for an admission fee can admire the beautiful artwork the house contains. Like many other similar homes it has become in effect an art gallery/museum. The owners have in most such cases either continued living in a small private section of the house, or have actually moved out to live in a more modest property often nearby. In some instances the “great house” has been turned over to the nation simply because the family resources could no longer support the costs of operating and maintaining the house. This is the case with Chatsworth House. Deborah, the eleventh Duchess of Devonshire, died at the age of 94, after spending the last years of her life in the rectory of the village of Edensor, near the great house. It is unlikely that subsequent members of the Cavendish family will ever live there again.

If you have enjoyed the PBS series *Downton Abbey*, and are interested in the march of history as it affected one aristocratic English family, [click here](#). And for a more light hearted, satirical view as seen by Noel Coward, musician and dramatist, [click here](#) for his song. *The Stately Homes of England*.

An [intriguing characteristic of these people](#) is their eccentricity, as illustrated earlier by Pedalling Pete; but another is their huge contribution to knowledge and culture down the centuries when few others had the means to indulge in education. I don’t think Pete made any such contributions, but numerous members of the aristocracy made discoveries and inventions when schools were inaccessible to all without the support of a rich family or the Church. But a significant number of our great scientists, writers, and explorers were the offspring of minor aristocratic parents, who often married into middle class entrepreneurial families, especially during and after the Industrial Revolution. Usually these would be the second son or even occasionally a daughter, who did not inherit the family estate.

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Although we owe much of our valuable historical and cultural heritage to the English Aristocracy, they are now a dying breed. Reaching back into history for many centuries, they were there at Runnymede in 1215 when King John was forced to sign *Magna Carta* and the foundation of our legal system was laid. They shaped English society through the centuries, contributing to literature, music, art and science. Many members of the aristocracy, such as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the parents of Queen Elizabeth II, and the wartime British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, are outstanding examples of the aristocracy, provided leadership through bad times and were instrumental in the Allies' final victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War. Everyone has seen pictures of the King, the Queen, and the Prime Minister when they made their visits to the bombed districts of London on the mornings after air raids. It is also true that the King and Queen spent most of the war years in Buckingham Palace in the heart of London, when no one would have complained if they had evacuated for safety to Balmoral Castle in Scotland.

Today, no longer able to maintain their beautiful properties themselves, the wealthy aristocratic owners of the stately homes are experiencing hard times and finding it impossible to maintain their palatial residences. Instead, they are turning them over to "the people", an ironic recognition, perhaps, of those who through the centuries made their existence possible. For generations many of the homes have been opened to the public to admire their art collections and beautiful gardens. The picture at the head of this article shows Chatsworth House and grounds. It is one of the most famous stately homes in England, and both the House and its grounds have been open to the public at a modest charge since shortly after the Second World War. The Cavendish family, however, have removed themselves to a small secluded section of the House, off limits to the public. Those who have watched the *Downton Abbey* television series are witnessing one more way in which owners of such homes are raising funds to maintain their homes. But the lifestyle they enjoyed for centuries, with dozens of servants, maids, footmen, and stable boys are now history.

How long they will even remain as owners of the great houses is unknown. The age of the wealthy aristocracy is gone. Their homes are fast becoming repositories of history and culture, and becoming conference and rehabilitation centres; the great houses are finally being restored to the people whose effort created them and whose property they rightfully are. The wheel has gone full circle.

- SLH

ON DATES AND DATING

THERE SEEMS TO BE A DEBATE starting on this topic, but it's nothing personal to do with your social life. No, we're simply discussing how you record the date on a document.

Wouldn't it be better if you didn't have to figure out what some of those dates mean? Consider a date like 10-11-16. Is it November 10th, 2016? Or 11th October 2016? Or maybe even October 16th in either 2010 or 2011, or maybe 1910 or 1911? Often it comes down to a guess, which is hardly a reliable method.

I have found the most useful format to be a numeric one following strictly the pattern of YYYY-MM-DD, where the year is given first, using all four digits; the month is second, with 2 digits, with a leading zero if necessary; and day is third, also with 2 digits and leading zero if needed. It makes sense to use a descending order of length of time periods, and it has the advantage of being the only format that can be reliably sorted by a computer. This is very useful if you want to use the date of a document as its title, to store in your computer.

You will notice the date at the head of page one of the BMD uses the suggested format, so this issue is dated 2016-02-05. But you can give the month as two letters (Fe = February, as 2016 Fe 05) if you wish, but the computer will not sort it without special coding, and you have to be careful with the months starting with M and J. So it is perhaps better to stick with all numbers.

If any readers have encountered problems with the suggested format, please let me know. I have encountered no problems other than the fact that people are not used to it. But when Canada introduced Metric Weights and Measures in the 1970s, we got used to it, and it was much more complicated than a mere standardisation of the date format. There was a gas station operator somewhere out west who refused to change his pumps to metric and was widely reported throughout Canada. I wonder how long he held out. So far the USA has refused to adapt, and they are now the only major non-metric country in the world, although they do conform to most international practices in scientific matters.

Anyway, BMD readers, enjoy your dating, no matter what format you choose: format may be the least of your concerns!

- SLH