

## Gender inequality to blame for low wages of Calgary women

### Income disparity harms families and can prevent women from leaving abusive situations

SARAH NEWMAN

Last December, for the first time in three years, Statistics Canada reported an increase in the number of Calgarians failing to earn a living wage. The study found that since 2008, 7,300 more women and 600 more men are low-wage earners. Women now make up almost two-thirds of the 65,000 low-wage earners in Calgary and 65 per cent of these female low-wage earners are over 20 years of age.

Women's low wages detrimentally affect the lives of men, too. Think of the sons of single mothers who struggle to pay the rent and put food on the table, or laid-off husbands forced to subsist on their wife's low income. There are also countless fathers or brothers who either depend upon, or help support, women with low-wage jobs. Women's low wages should not be understood as a 'woman's issue', but rather as something that negatively affects us all.

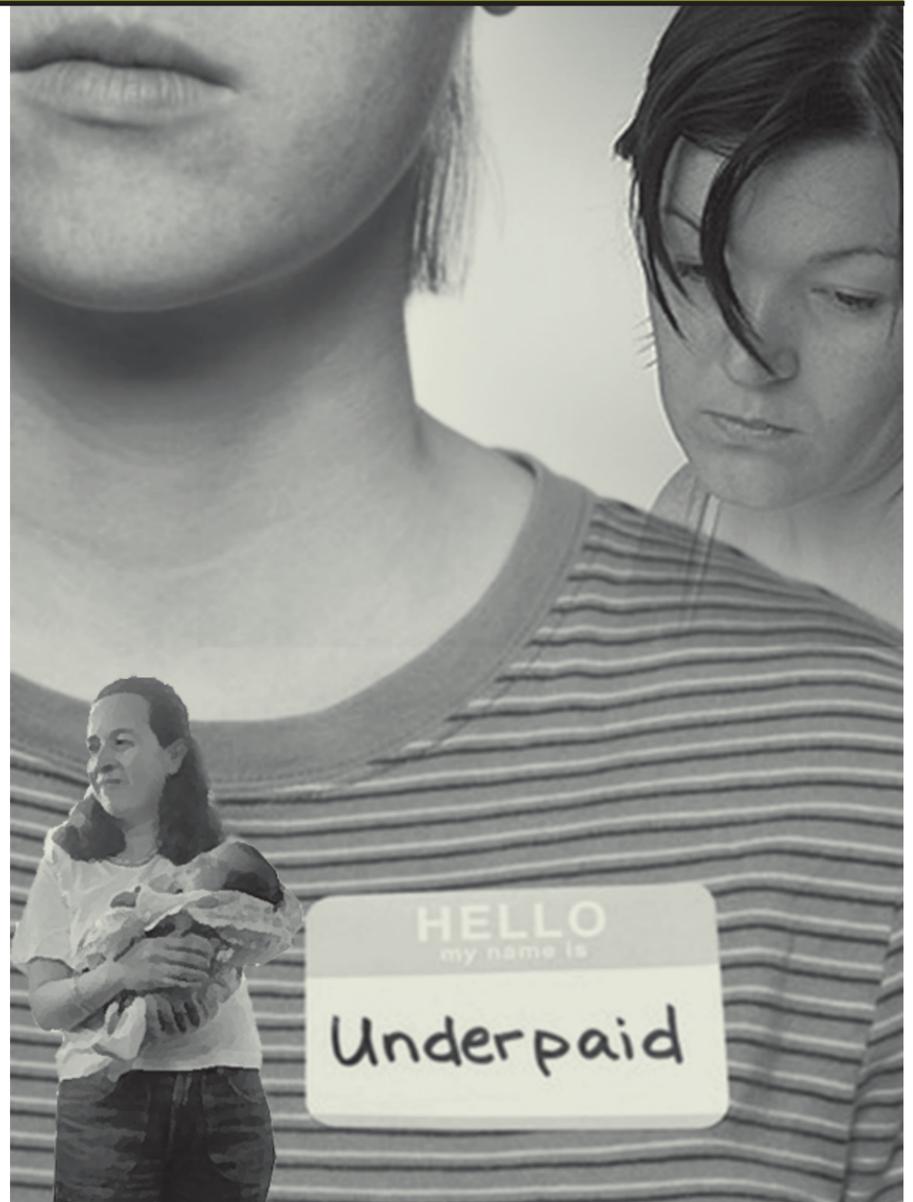
When women receive less, they make less for themselves and their loved ones. Most families in Canada now rely on two incomes, since dual-earners now account for three-quarters of all couples with dependent children – up from just over one-third in 1976. This income is not used to simply supplement the family income; families increasingly rely on women's wages to make ends meet. Statistics Canada reports that in 2008, most dual-earner wives contributed almost 45 per cent of total family earnings.

With the current economic slowdown women have become key contributors to family income. This last year, Statistics Canada reported negative employment

growth in most male-dominated industries in Alberta, such as manufacturing (-9.6 per cent) and construction (-8.0 per cent), which means many women have become the sole breadwinner for their families. Women now make up almost half of the employed workforce in Alberta, yet average hourly wage of women in Alberta was lower than for men across all age groups.

Wage discrimination against women has tangible and negative effects not only on the lives of women, but on their families. These families are unable to pay for basic necessities such as utilities and healthy food choices. The Calgary Interfaith Food Bank reported that during March 2009, 80 per cent more people used their services than in March 2008. Mortgages and rent become impossible to pay, leaving our local shelters to provide housing for these women and their families. Children's education becomes too much of a financial burden, resulting in high dropout rates among children from low-income families and a dramatically lower numbers of students from low-income families attaining post-secondary. After a lifetime of work, with no pension and no savings, these female low-wage workers will not be able to retire.

Wage discrimination is particularly dire for women trying to leave an abusive relationship or who are single and the sole supporters of their families. Several research studies have established that women who are economically dependent are less likely to leave an abusive partner; the more economically dependent women are, the more violence they tend to endure from abusive partners. The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters reports that



Several research studies have established that women who are economically dependent are less likely to leave an abusive partner; the more economically dependent women are, the more violence they tend to endure from abusive partners.



Alberta leads the provinces in domestic assault, homicide-suicide, stalking and is third in domestic homicide. Once these women do finally leave an abusive relationship, they are often faced with poverty. In 2004, Statistics Canada found that female-headed households were more than twice as likely to be poor than male-headed households.

Gender should not be a barrier to earning a living wage. The consequences are far-reaching and long-lasting, and impact women, their families and the health of society at large.

If you'd like to learn more about how individuals and employers can help establish a living wage in Calgary, please e-mail [info@vibrantcalgary.com](mailto:info@vibrantcalgary.com).

*Sarah Newman is the Project Coordinator at Vibrant Communities Calgary, an organization aiming to increase the social, economic and political engagement of Calgarians. For more information about Vibrant Communities Calgary, please visit [www.vibrantcalgary.com](http://www.vibrantcalgary.com).*

#### INSIDE THE POST

EDITORIAL, page 2

LETTERS, page 3

HEALTH CARE  
Profit before people, page 4

ENERGY  
OPEC and the Alberta Advantage, page 5

ENVIRONMENT  
At least it's a start? page 6

INTERNATIONAL  
El Salvador election offers glimpse of a democratic future, page 7

Global boomerang: the price of greed, page 9

ARTS  
A Gift of Grace illuminates schizophrenia's impact on families, page 10

We Know (poem), page 10

# the Post

Volume XIV, N°2,  
Spring/Summer 2009

## What is the Parkland Institute?

Parkland Institute is an Alberta wide research network that examines issues of public policy. The Institute is based in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta and its research network includes members from most of Alberta's academic institutions and other organizations involved in public policy research. It operates within the established and distinctive tradition of Canadian political economy and is non-partisan. Parkland was founded in 1996 and its mandate is to:

- Conduct research on economic, social, cultural, and political issues facing Albertans and Canadians.
- Publish research and provide informed comment on current policy issues to the media and the public.
- Sponsor conferences and colloquia.
- Bring together the academic and non-academic communities.
- Train graduate students.

Opinions expressed in this newspaper reflect the views of the writer, and not necessarily those of the Parkland Institute. Readers are invited to submit letters and articles, which may be edited for style and length. Information on up coming events and conferences may also be submitted. The *Parkland Post* is organized and administered as an editorial collective.

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Canadian Publications

Mail Agreement 40065264

ISSN 1206-9515

# editorial



Caitlin Crawshaw

## Hey, at least activism is cheap!



There are times when I look around Edmonton and wonder, 'Is this what a recession looks like?' Trips across town are punctuated with traffic blockages due to construction projects, the parking lots at the malls are always packed on the weekend and while there are noticeably fewer Hummers on the roads, new cars abound. Though people compare this recession to the Great Depression, we're hardly saving bits of string and old newspaper, though the most pragmatic among us are vamping up backyard gardens and taking cans to the bottle depot.

But if you turn on the CBC or BBC for more than three minutes, it's pretty apparent that life in Alberta is far beyond what much of the world can ever expect to have. While jobs are being lost in Alberta and few of us feel financially secure, we've still got more than we need, when it comes down to it. Cecily Mills' story about the winter election in El Salvador (Page 7) reminds us that much of the planet lacks things we take for granted, like flushing toilets and honest democratic process. Of course, poverty is certainly a problem in Alberta, too, and many people struggle to earn a living wage, as Sarah Newman's article illustrates (Page 1). But most of us have a great deal to be thankful for.

However, our provincial government isn't doing much to preserve our quality of life or bring greater fortune to those who are struggling. With so much wealth, we should be taking far better care of the least among us. The government should be working to preserve our natural heritage, not hiding behind provincial-federal jurisdiction issues (though Nigel Douglas' article on Page 6 suggests this is changing). Instead of focusing on ways to make a public health-care system more efficient, Stelmach et al. are helping Canadian neoliberals convince us all that a "crisis" is afoot, providing false justification for privatization (Page 4), which will hurt all but the wealthy.

We are generally very lucky as a province, but we're becoming unlucky as our government fails to represent our best interests. In so many ways, it isn't really the

economy, but poor politics, which threaten our communities.

So this summer, when you're looking for cheap sources of entertainment and socialization, why not consider a little civil participation? It's a free way to meet like-minded people. It can be fun, liberating and a source of pride. If you're feeling blue after job loss, under-employment or falling investments, getting out of the house to spend time with others and working towards a common cause can be empowering. And if you're one of Alberta's blessed, as many Parkland supporters are, why not give back?

Of course, many *Post* readers are already well-connected with Alberta's advocacy groups. But if you're just getting your feet wet, these sites can help get you started:

Alberta Wilderness Association:

[www.albertawilderness.ca](http://www.albertawilderness.ca)

Friends of Medicare:

[www.friendsofmedicare.org](http://www.friendsofmedicare.org)

Public Interest Alberta:

[www.pialberta.org](http://www.pialberta.org)

General activist resource:

<http://activist.ca/>

Alberta Public Interest Group:

[www.apirg.org](http://www.apirg.org)

Greenpeace:

[www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

Sierra Club Prairie:

[www.sierraclub.ca/prairie/](http://www.sierraclub.ca/prairie/)

Friends of the Lubicon:

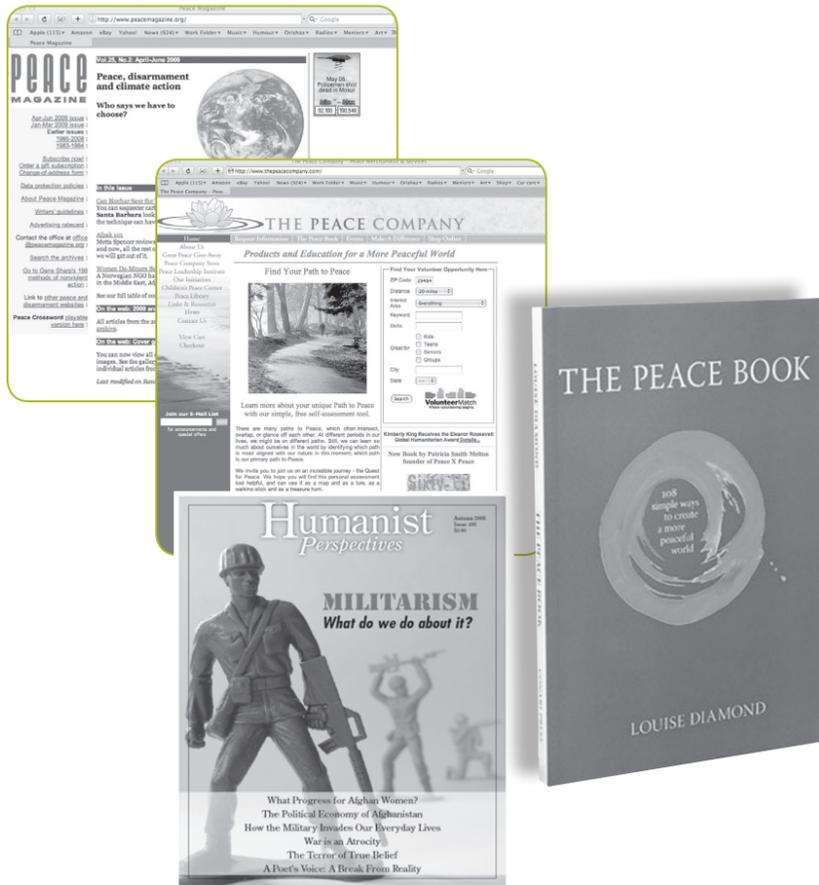
[www.lubicon.org](http://www.lubicon.org)

Naturally, you're very welcome to get more involved with the Parkland Institute, too. Interested volunteers can contact Cheri Harris (parkland@ualberta.ca) for more information. And, as always, the *Post* welcomes new volunteer writers (parkpost@ualberta.ca).

# letters to the editor

## Peace resources abound

Re: *Author wrong about Christian fundamentalist and neoconservatism* by John Zylstra (letters, Winter 2009)



I was very glad to read that John Zylstra wrote in favour of justice and peace. This world becomes a better place when we work for justice for all and have a vision for world peace.

There are three resources for people to consider - I hope you find them as interesting and valuable as I do:

- 1. Peace Magazine:** To read past issues of their magazine go to [www.peacemagazine.org](http://www.peacemagazine.org). The July-September 2008 issue is excellent.
- 2. Humanist Perspectives:** I recommend the autumn 2008 issue, *Militarism: What do we do about it?* In his article, "Militarism in Canada and the World: What do we do about it?" Murray Thomson, a member of the Quaker Community, writes, "Militarism today is bad for the global economy, terrible for the environment, hugely destructive of human rights and of life itself, and a major risk to the future of humanity." Read the article at [www.humanistperspectives.org](http://www.humanistperspectives.org).
- 3. The peace book,** which makes a wonderful and inexpensive gift, is available from the Peace Company, [www.thepeacecompany.com](http://www.thepeacecompany.com). The author, Louise Deamind, concludes each chapter with notes on how to practice the four principles of peace, which are: community, cooperation, nonviolence and witness. She also includes sites and books for further reference. The book contains 108 practical steps that anyone can take in their daily lives to express the four principles of peace.

The United Nations has declared 2001-2010 as the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the world. Great progress has been made in raising global awareness of this initiative. [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

Peace be with you.

Nellie Spicer  
Walsh, Alta.



## Unfettered global greed will continue to create economic crises

French Prime Minister Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were to be applauded for calling on the recent G20 summit to approve the black listing of tax havens and the regulation of hedge funds as well as rules for remuneration of corporate managers. Unfortunately, despite all the rhetoric, it appears nothing much will change.

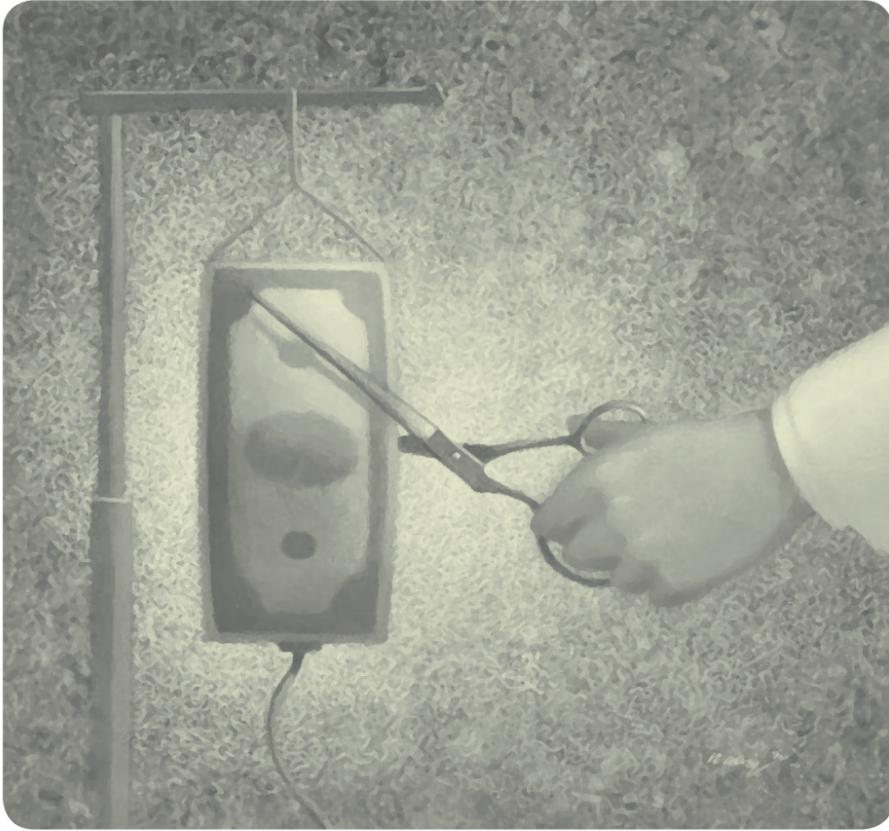
For too long now the super rich have had free reign to reward themselves handsomely and to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. It is these parasites who are largely to blame for the current woes of capitalism. Their excesses have led to the loss of savings, pensions, and jobs for ordinary working people.

The alternative proposal to implement larger stimulus programs in response to the global economic crisis will not work. It will only shift the burden of paying for the crisis unto the backs of working people. As long as the super rich are allowed to pursue their selfish greed unfettered, the capitalist world will continue to move from crisis to crisis, carrying with it the imposition of poverty, hunger, and hopelessness for an ever increasing number of the masses.

William Dascovich  
Edmonton, Alta.

# health care

## Profit before people



### Manufactured health-care “crisis” designed to justify privatization

**WILLIAM DASCAVICH**

The problem with public health care functioning in a free-market society is that it is perceived as being socialistic. After all, the basis of a capitalist society is the unfettered pursuit of self-interest. Public health care makes no allowances for investment for profit. It is viewed as an obstacle to the maximization of profits by the capitalist super rich.

The super rich tolerate public police protection, fire protection, and the military, because these services reduce the possibility of harm to themselves and are too costly to maintain on a private basis. They tolerate a public primary education system even though they seldom use it, because they recognize the advantage of having an educated work force that is capable of enhancing their profits. But when it comes to public health care, they view funding it with tax dollars as a drain on their profits and a missed opportunity for a lucrative investment.

The super rich, particularly those connected with the private health-care insurance or pharmaceutical corporations, hire international public relations firms to persistently lobby government officials and decision-makers, with a view to having health care in Canada privatized. They regard Canada's health-care system as a fat cow ready for milking.

Right-wing government officials are aware that the vast majority of Canadians

view public health care as a sacred cow that is not to be messed with. However, this doesn't prevent them from making every effort to gradually whittle away public health-care benefits. Their only impediment is the Canada Health Act (CHA), which requires every province to provide publicly administered, medically necessary health care that is universal, comprehensive, portable, and accessible. Since each province decides which procedures are “medically necessary,” there is considerable discrepancy in the extent of coverage between provinces. Some provinces take advantage of this ambiguity to delist benefits.

Another clever strategy used by politicians (and no doubt encouraged by corporations that stand to benefit) is the chaos theory of market restructuring. Simply put, it involves deliberately creating chaos so people will be dissatisfied, then capturing the market by providing alternatives. The move, in the mid-1990s, to close hospitals, cut the availability of active treatment beds, withdraw certain insurance benefits, and compel patients to wait longer for treatment, were all part and parcel of the game plan to create chaos. As soon as dissatisfaction reaches a critical level, the private sector is ready to step in and provide solutions.

Even though they contravene the CHA, private for-profit clinics are allowed to operate in several provinces, with the excuse that they reduce wait times. The irony is that by bleeding health

professionals from the public system, the private clinics actually increase wait times in the public sector.

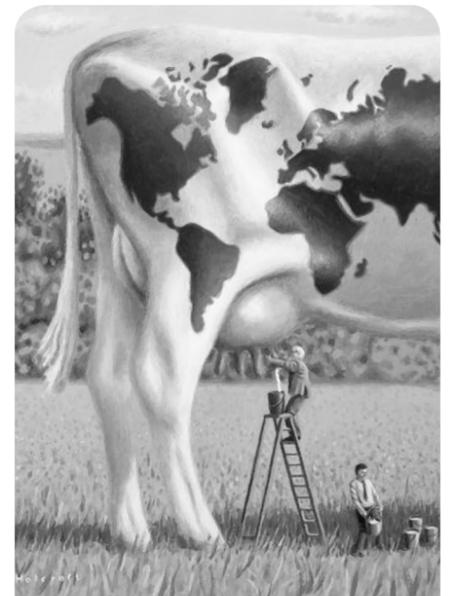
Delisting services that they don't consider to be “medically necessary” is another measure taken by governments that are unsympathetic to the public system. This despite the reality that delisting these services can often result in patients eventually ending up in hospitals which are already short of staff and beds, and where care is much more costly. Of course, whenever a service is delisted, it becomes a plum for the private health-care insurers, who are eager to step in and fill the void.

Moving to private health clinics increases the overall cost of health insurance because shareholder profits have to be factored in. According to 2008 figures released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the U.S. spent 17 per cent of its gross domestic product on health care as compared to 9.7 per cent in Canada, 10.7 per cent in Germany, and 9.5 per cent in France (see [www.nhc.org](http://www.nhc.org)). The latter three countries have public health care, while private health maintenance organizations (HMOs) provide the bulk of health services in the U.S. A switch to a private system in Canada can only result in fewer benefits for those who cannot afford high private insurance premiums. Health professionals will “following the money” and shift to the private sector, leaving the public system with the crumbs.

Given these realities, why then, do some provincial politicians pursue the privatization route? There can be no doubt that they are reacting to immense lobbying pressures by health-care corporations. Sustainability is often used as an excuse, but health-care costs in Canada, as a percentage of gross national product, have remained relatively flat over the past several decades.

There can be no dispute that there are some gross inefficiencies in the public health-care system. A national drug plan would reduce drug costs through single desk bulk buying. An expanded long-term care system with adequate facilities and staffing would take the pressure off acute care beds. Setting up public community clinics manned by teams of health professionals would reduce the crisis onto hospital emergency rooms, and a properly staffed home-care program would serve to reduce the need for costly hospital and long term care facilities.

Lack of funds is often offered as an excuse for cutting health benefits. This claim is especially absurd in the province of Alberta, where Premier Stelmach refused to accept the recommendations of his own Royalty Review Committee to increase petroleum royalties to a more realistic level. Across the country, super rich Canadians are avoiding the payment of their fair share of taxes with impunity by using tax havens, yet nothing is done about it.



The super rich... hire international public relations firms to persistently lobby government officials and decision-makers, with a view to having health care in Canada privatized. They regard Canada's health-care system as a fat cow ready for milking.

One has to wonder who it is that is in charge of Governments? Is it the ordinary people who elect MPs and MLAs, or is it the super rich who fund right-wing political parties?

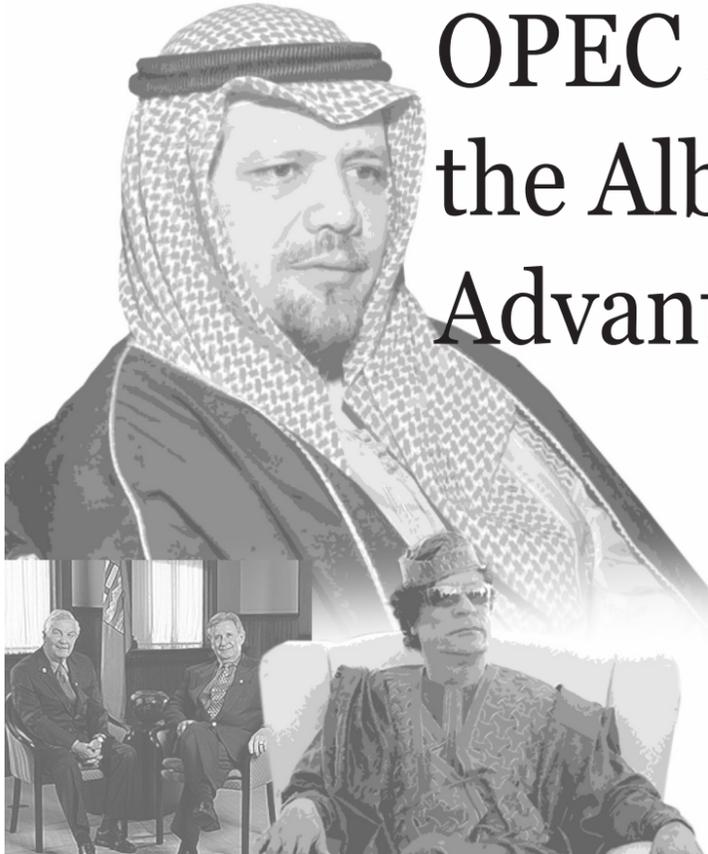
*William Dascavich farmed in the Mundare area and is now retired. Throughout his life he has been involved in numerous activist activities including community affairs, the peace movement, social justice, and environmental concerns.*

### volunteers!

The Parkland Institute needs volunteers from communities around Alberta. We are looking for: distribution, web page design, media list, event organizing, promotions, fundraising and more!

To get involved call Cheri at (780) 492-8558 or email us at [parkland@ualberta.ca](mailto:parkland@ualberta.ca)

## energy

OPEC and  
the Alberta  
Advantage

Excerpt from *No Free Lunch and Other Myths*

**BILL LONGSTAFF**

In March, 1975, in the Palace of Nations near Algiers, a group of men assembled to do a piece of business that would affect the fortunes of the entire world. The meeting was hosted by the President of Algeria, Houari Boumédiène. Among the assembled elite were the Shah of Iran, Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Carlos Pérez, president of Venezuela, and the sheikhs of Abu Dhabi and Kuwait. These were the leaders of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and they controlled the life blood of the industrial age: oil. The crowd applauded as the Shah of Iran embraced and kissed Saddam Hussein. It was an ecstatic moment.

The oil men had much to celebrate. The price of oil, under US\$3 per barrel only two years earlier was now four times that, and would go very much higher. It might seem they had achieved a victory of a cartel over the free market, but that was not the case. What OPEC had achieved was the victory of one cartel over another. Oil and the free market are not well acquainted. Few industries have produced more vocal advocates of the free market, and few industries have seen less of it.

John D. Rockefeller had seen to that early in the game. While others toiled in the oil fields of Pennsylvania, the first great oil state, the ex-bookkeeper bought a refinery business and conspired with other refiners and the railroads to undercut the producers with cheap transport. He bought up oilfields to integrate his company from production to marketing. Establishing the Standard Oil Trust to get around investment laws, hiring teams of lawyers to defend his actions while befriend and bribing legislators, he monopolized oil.

Ultimately the United States Supreme Court broke up Standard Oil, but that did not end monopoly. It merely set the stage for the cartel christened the “seven

sisters.” Three of the sisters, Standard Oil of New Jersey, Standard Oil of New York and Standard Oil of California (ultimately Exxon, Mobil and Socal), were daughters of Rockefeller’s empire. The other major players were two American companies, Gulf and Texaco, and two European companies, Shell and British Petroleum.

With new supplies coming onto world markets after the First World War, the sisters were faced with an oil glut. Consequently, in 1928, the heads of Exxon, Shell and British Petroleum formed a cartel. The conspirators agreed to fix market share, tailor growth in supply to avoid gluts, and rig prices. The agreement was accepted by the other sisters and most other American companies that operated internationally. It couldn’t be rigidly enforced – it was after all, secret – nonetheless, it guided the behaviour of the international oil industry well into the 1960s.

But by the early ‘70s, big change was afoot. In 1969, King Idris of Libya was overthrown by a group of army officers headed by a young colonel, Muammar al-Qadhafi. Qadhafi took on the companies, broke their solidarity, and bullied them into accepting increased prices for his Libyan crude. Then, led by Sheik Zaki Yamani, Saudi Arabia’s oil minister, the producers began to demand part ownership of the concessions.

In late 1973, the oil companies met with OPEC to negotiate a price, as had been the practice. Yamani asked for \$5 per barrel but the companies refused. In the meantime, war had broken out as Egypt and Syria invaded Israeli-occupied territory, and the Arabs were threatening an oil embargo of Israel’s supporters. Yamani declared they would no longer negotiate prices with the companies. OPEC set the price of oil on its own, and its Arab members began their embargo. In a few months the price of a barrel of oil was \$12. The cartel had passed into new hands.

The OPEC cartel is by no means perfect. With differing amounts of reserves, and differing interests, the oil states do not always agree. The price of oil rises and falls with their solidarity. Nonetheless, OPEC has brought the oil kings of the Middle East the biggest free lunch in history.

What does this story of cartels and government interference in the marketplace have to do with Alberta? Merely everything. These are the forces that created modern Alberta. Just as OPEC created one of the great wealth and power shifts in the modern world, it created the greatest wealth and power shift in Canadian history. Peter Foster, in *The Blue-Eyed Sheiks*, referred to it as “the most significant turnabout in political relationships since the birth of Confederation.”

Alberta’s oil industry did not always show such potential. It didn’t get really serious until 1947 when Imperial Oil, following a discouraging series of dry holes, drilled into an ancient reef near the small town of Leduc in central Alberta, and the well gushed oil. Alberta crude began to flow west into British Columbia and into the north-western states and east into Ontario.

And there it ran headlong into a competitor too powerful to challenge on its own - imported oil. Foreign oil could be offloaded from tankers in Montreal cheaper than it could be shipped by pipeline from Western Canada, yet it was in Eastern Canada that producers were obliged to look for a large and secure market. The major companies, subsidiaries of the Seven Sisters, were not concerned. They bought foreign crude from their parent companies, refined it in their eastern refineries and marketed it through their stations. Independent Alberta companies, on the other hand, desperately wanted secure access to the eastern markets. They begged the federal government to protect them from the foreigners. In their favour was the election in 1957 of a Conservative government headed by the westerner John Diefenbaker.

“The Chief” came through for his western brothers and sisters. Like his predecessor, John A. Macdonald, he instituted a national policy to facilitate east-west trade, in this case a national oil policy that, among other things, established the Ottawa Valley Line. All markets west of the Ottawa Valley were to be reserved for western crude; markets to the east could continue to enjoy cheaper foreign imports. Ontario consumers were to pay higher-than-market prices to subsidize the Alberta oil industry including, of course, its royalties to the Alberta government. The national oil policy was pronounced in 1960, coincidentally the same year OPEC was formed.

The policy served western independent producers well until the dramatic events of 1973 after which it was redundant. As the OPEC cartel flexed its muscles, driving international oil prices sky-high, immense riches accrued not only to its members but also to non-members like Alberta, which, no longer having to compete with cheap imports, rode its golden coattails to enviable prosperity.

The federal government, fearing the effect of rapidly escalating oil prices on the Canadian economy and feeling also that the windfall should be shared by all Canadians - and led now by an easterner, Pierre Elliott Trudeau - tried to simultaneously keep a lid on the price of crude while capturing its share of the bonanza and expanding its influence in the industry. Its efforts, culminating in a new national oil policy, the National Energy Program (NEP), sparked the most bitter federal/provincial feud in Canadian history.

When it was over, Alberta wasn’t as rich as it thought it deserved to be, but it was filthy rich, nonetheless. Oil prices were temporarily maintained below the world price but still managed to triple in two years and quadruple in five, and Alberta would take half the increase in royalties. The province’s royalties from oil and gas production rose from \$214 million in 1972-3 to \$3.4 billion in 1979-80. Billions more accrued from lease sales. Alberta boomed, its cities and towns exploded with growth, attracting migrants from British Columbia to Newfoundland, seeking a piece of the action. Its political clout increased accordingly. Without OPEC aggression, the NEP and the provincial/federal wrangling that followed, there would have been no Reform/Alliance Party and Canada’s politics would be very different. OPEC made many of Alberta’s most successful companies and businessmen, including a large slice of its economic oligarchy.

OPEC’s influence is no longer what it was, and the major energy earner in Alberta today is natural gas, but tar sands revenues are increasing rapidly. Energy revenues of \$11.8 billion flowed into Alberta’s coffers in 2006-07.

Albertans are inclined to believe their unique prosperity was built on free-market principles, a comforting myth for the conservative-minded, but a myth nonetheless, more fable than fact. That anathema of free-marketers, government interference in the marketplace, has, from Diefenbaker to OPEC, been the best thing that ever happened to Alberta, providing the province with a free banquet of sumptuous proportions. Albertans should genuflect in gratitude to Muammar al-Qadhafi, catalyst of the shift in power from the cartel of oil companies to the cartel of oil countries, or perhaps to Sheik Yamani of Saudi Arabia, prime mover behind OPEC’s 1973 machinations. These men, not Peter Lougheed, nor Ralph Klein, nor the CEOs of the oil companies, were the architects of Alberta’s fortunes and affluence.

*This article is an excerpt from No Free Lunch and Other Myths (Ballot Publishing, 2005), a collection of essays covering a range of economic, political and moral myths that bedevil our times.*

*Bill Longstaff is a Calgary writer and activist. His books include: No Free Lunch and Other Myths; Confessions of a Matriarchist: Rebuilding Society on Feminine Principles; and Democracy Undone: The Practice and the Promise of Self-governance in Canada. He blogs at blongstaff.blogspot.com.*

## environment

## At least it's a start?

## The legislative foundations for protecting Species at Risk in Alberta

NIGEL DOUGLAS

Endangered or threatened? Blue list or red list? At risk or perhaps at risk? Endangered species designations come in a bewildering variety of shapes and sizes, both federal and provincial, and it can be a complicated process to sort through the different monikers and work out what it all actually means for the species themselves.

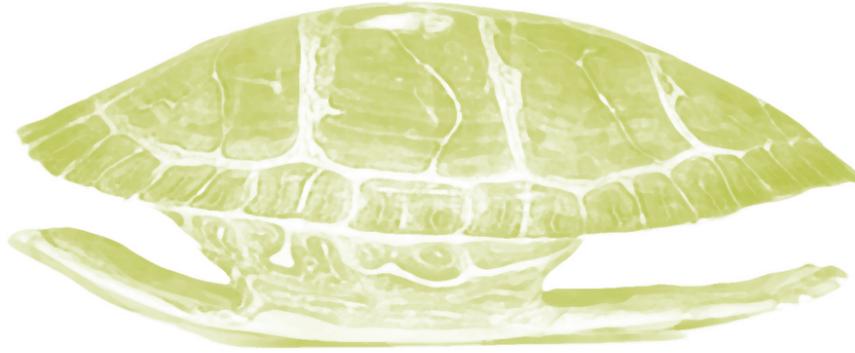
When it comes to environmental issues, the line between federal and provincial responsibility is a fuzzy one; essentially, the environment is an area of shared jurisdiction. The provincial government manages wildlife, as it does other resources it "owns." But wildlife cannot exist without habitat, and whose responsibility is it to manage or restore wildlife habitat? The province manages the two-thirds of Alberta's public land and has some jurisdiction over private land. But on federal land, such as national parks and military reserves, the federal government is responsible for managing endangered species and other species to "prevent them from becoming at risk."

**Federal endangered species listing**

Federally, endangered species are listed under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) passed in 2003 to "prevent Canadian indigenous species, subspecies, and distinct populations from becoming extirpated or extinct, to provide for the recovery of endangered or threatened species, and encourage the management of other species to prevent them from becoming at risk." On federally administered land – national parks and military reserves, for example – the provisions of SARA have some strength, including "prohibitions that make it an offence to kill, harm, harass, capture, take, possess, collect, buy, sell or trade an individual of a species listed in Schedule 1 of SARA as endangered, threatened or extirpated." But protection of the habitat that supports the species is much more vague.

According to the SARA website, the federal government's Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is charged with making "the accurate designations based on the best available scientific and Aboriginal traditional or community knowledge." The federal government then decides whether or not to act on these recommendations.

COSEWIC's listing process follows a series of steps. Essentially, a candidate list is used to prioritize which species require assessment; after that, wildlife status reports are created for each species, which are assigned a risk category (extirpated, endangered, threatened, a special concern). The relevant minister (Environment or Fisheries and Oceans) then issues a response statement with timelines for future action, commissions suitable experts to produce a recovery strategy and writes an action plan.



Listing a species can be a maddeningly long process. COSEWIC recommended listing the westslope cutthroat trout, for example, as threatened in 2006 – the politicians have yet to ratify that listing.

As soon as a species is listed, people are prohibited from killing or harming members of the species as well as from destroying a "residence." However, nothing is said about protecting the species' broader habitat – its neighbourhood.

Recovery strategies or management plans are required to be developed for all listed species. Further to this, their critical habitat should be identified and protected. In practice, although recovery strategies have gone some way to identifying critical habitat for endangered species, very little has been done to protect that vital habitat. On Feb. 14, 2008, Alberta Wilderness Association and five other conservation groups launched a lawsuit against federal Minister of Environment John Baird for refusing to identify and protect critical greater sage-grouse habitat.

Another of SARA's great weaknesses rests in its minimal territorial scope. First, it only applies to public, not private, lands. Second, SARA does not apply to most public lands south of the northern territories; the vast majority of Crown land in southern Canada is provincial land. The Government of Canada's website optimistically, or naively, proclaims: "In most situations, provincial laws will provide protection for critical habitat." Sadly, Alberta does not appear to be one of those cases. Although SARA gives the federal Minister of the Environment the power to "attempt to enter into agreements with provinces and territories for them to develop recovery strategies for species under their management responsibility," in practice there is little political will in Ottawa to try to force provinces to take their protection duty seriously.

**Alberta endangered species listing**

If provinces are expected to take the lead role, what has Alberta done? The province's 1982 Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta refers to wildlife somewhat clinically as a "replenishable Crown resource." Currently, Alberta is one of only two provinces that do not have specialized endangered species legislation. Instead, endangered species are managed through the 1984 Wildlife Act, an act initially designed to govern hunting and other allocation of

the wildlife "resource." Subsequent changes to the Wildlife Act have allowed for some degree of endangered species management, but the act is ill suited to this added, much different, role. For example, a Minister can make regulations protecting and restoring wildlife habitat, including that of an endangered species, but these provisions have never been used and there is no habitat in Alberta that is legally protected for the benefit of endangered species.

Alberta's "serious" involvement in species at risk began in 1996, when the provincial government signed on to the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk in Canada. In 1997, the province produced its own Strategy for the Management of Species at Risk in Alberta, which laid out the process for species status evaluation, listing and recovery planning.

**As soon as a species is listed, people are prohibited from killing or harming members of the species as well as from destroying a "residence." However, nothing is said about protecting the species' broader habitat – its neighbourhood.**

A key tool potentially could be Alberta's multi-stakeholder Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC). Taking advice from its Scientific Subcommittee, the ESCC reviews the status of wildlife in the province and recommends suitable designation to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development (SRD). Species may be listed as endangered, threatened or extirpated (extinct). This is the theory at least; in practice it does not often work like this. The ESCC's 2002 recommendation that the grizzly bear should be designated a threatened species has been ignored by successive SRD Ministers. Political will is certainly no stronger on the species-at-risk file in Edmonton than it is in Ottawa.

This divorce of management decisions from scientific assessments of species' health is a recurring theme in wildlife management in Alberta. Scientists on the Scientific Subcommittee make their recommendations to the multi-stakeholder ESCC, which includes representatives from

the forestry, oil and gas and irrigation sectors. This committee then makes recommendations to the Minister, who then may or may not decide to set up a multi-stakeholder recovery team. If established, a team has two years to produce a recovery plan, which may or may not be adopted and implemented. Judging by the grizzly's treatment each step of the process takes us further away from the essential scientific conclusion – the species is threatened. Eight years after the grizzly bear was first recommended for listing, not a single hectare of grizzly bear habitat has been protected, even as the population estimates have plummeted from 1,000 bears to less than 400.

While the potential of the ESCC has been damaged by ministerial discretion and the absence of political will, its potential also has suffered from the Committee's lack of public input and accountability. The committee meets in private; most of the committee's website has not been updated since January 2007, and no committee reports have been posted since June 2006.

Taken together both federal and Alberta endangered species laws do little to recognize how important protecting habitat is to the preservation and recovery of those species; without change this crucial flaw is likely to be fatal.

**A glimmer of hope?**

Alberta is clearly in dire need of its own specific endangered species legislation. I like to think the recent government report, Alberta's Strategy for the Management of Species at Risk (2009-2014), recognizes this. It commits to "(e)xamine whether a provincial Species at Risk Act would enhance the current legal measures provided under Alberta's Wildlife Act to accommodate species at risk in the province." If nothing else, this could enable the Alberta government to avoid the ignominy of being compelled to act by some future federal government or the courts.

The strategy goes on to say that "Successfully implementing approved recovery and management plans is the true measure of how well the Alberta program provides for the needs of species at risk. Success can only be achieved if appropriate changes are made in the way we manage a species and its habitat." This honest, frank definition of recovery recognizes the vital relationship between habitat protection and species recovery. Let us hope, and urge our politicians, to see this as a crucial step towards finally taking meaningful action to assist those species we have done so much to harm.

*This article first appeared in the April 2009 issue of the Wild Lands Advocate.*

*Nigel Douglas is a conservation specialist with Alberta Wilderness Association.*

## international



CECILY MILLS

## El Salvador election offers glimpse of a democratic future



FMLN's presidential candidate Mauricio Funes has won the country's presidential election.

This January, I was part of a delegation of more than 80 observers from 11 nations assembled by El Salvador social justice group The Centre for Exchange and Solidarity (CIS) to oversee the Jan. 18 election. We received accreditation from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) to carry out the tremendous task of supporting democracy in the small Central American nation that has long struggled with government corruption.

This year, democracy in El Salvador was especially at risk. It is normally the case that when municipal and parliamentary elections (held every three years) and presidential (held every five years) coincide, all three elections are held on the same day. This year, ARENA, the powerful ruling party, decided to hold separate elections instead, scheduling the municipal and parliamentary elections on Jan. 18 and the presidential election on March 15. This forced opposition parties to disburse twice as much from their meager coffers and the Salvadoran government an extra US \$10 million, and cost voters twice as much in transportation and lost wages. The ruling parties, ARENA, PCN and PDC – all right wing – manipulated the law to change the electoral playing field to their advantage. Through political maneuvering, the PCN and the PDC retained their legal status even though they did not receive enough votes in 2004. ARENA has held the presidency for 20 consecutive years. Their 2009 presidential candidate is Rodrigo Ávila, a tough police chief. In previous elections, ARENA vowed to exert a “strong hand” against crime and violence, yet there are still 12 homicides per day in El Salvador. ARENA equates the FMLN with Communism, Violence and Terrorism. Publicly congratulating an ARENA mayor on his victory over the FMLN incumbent on Jan. 18, Ávila boasted: “We took away this mayoralty from the communists, radicals and guerrillas.”

The FMLN, the guerrilla movement of the 1980s, took part in its first elections in 1994 and is now the main opposition party. Its presidential candidate, Mauricio Funes, a journalist with a great deal of credibility and no history of party militancy, distances himself from previous FMLN positions, promising not to pull out of the Central American Free Trade Agreement with the United States or to reverse the Salvadoran government's decision to adopt the U.S. dollar as its currency. The other parties of the Left obtained less than 3 per cent of the national vote.

Realistically, a change of government could greatly improve the lives of ordinary people, who often struggle to make ends meet. Despite complaints about the economic downturn, El Salvador's economic woes are something many Albertans may struggle to comprehend. The country is the smallest in Central America. It is 31 times smaller than Alberta, yet it has a population of almost 7 million – that's more than double Alberta's 3 million. The country has a GDP of \$20 billion – and a \$19 billion debt. Servicing the debt costs twice as much as the country's education costs and three times as much as health care. More than 30 per cent of people live in poverty, and Salvadorans living abroad send \$3.7 billion a year home to relatives.

Most Salvadorans eke out a living in the crowded informal sector. El Salvador has less than 600,000 formal or salaried jobs. Over the last four or five years, the number of maquila (assembly plant) jobs dropped from 100,000 to 60,000 because of elimination of quotas for China and because jobs are moving to Nicaragua where salaries are still lower than El Salvador's maquila monthly salaries of \$173.78. A family of five needs about \$700 per month to live; food alone costs \$170 per month. However, with jobs being cut, no one dares complain.

Money vanishes in El Salvador. In 2003, ARENA approved \$29.9 million to construct a new maternity hospital to replace the old one damaged in the January/February 2001 earthquakes. In 2008, the money, mainly from the World Bank, has withered to \$1.3 million, before pounding a single nail. Just about everything has

been privatized. Salvadorans are engaged in campaigns to keep health care public and for the declaration of water as a common good and human right.

As CIS volunteers, Canada's Consul in El Salvador received us warmly, but failed to address our social justice concerns. For several years now, environmental, church, and human rights groups – both in Canada and El Salvador – have opposed gold exploitation by Canadian Pacific Rim in Cabañas, one of the poorest departments of El Salvador. The Consul dismissed our concerns, likely because 75 per cent of investors in the Canadian-based company are Americans, not Canadians.

El Salvador is the only Latin American country that doesn't require political parties to account for their funds. Early in the campaign, the U.S. accused the FMLN of planning to finance their campaign with help from Venezuela. Instead of passing an accountability law, ARENA prefers ambiguity so it can attack the FMLN while not being accountable for its own fundraising.

For all eight elections held since the 1992 Peace Accords, CIS has organized international observation. After each election CIS and other international observer groups suggest measures to make elections more democratic: a residential voters' list so people vote at the polling station closest to their domicile. Presently, an alphabetical list assigns voters from the same neighborhood to different and sometimes distant polling stations. Voting near one's residence increases participation and deters identity fraud.

There were 4,226,479 people registered to vote in 2009. Twenty-nine per cent of

voters were residents of San Salvador, the largest of the country's 16 departments (electoral districts). La Libertad and Santa Ana represent the second and third largest departments, which contain 11 and 9 per cent of the voting population, respectively.

Another limitation to the electoral process is the lack of advance polls and absentee ballots, which means that more than 2.3 million Salvadorans living in the exterior and those absent from their municipality on Election Day cannot vote. The voter must present his Universal Identification Document (DUI) at the voting table designated on the voters' lists prepared early in 2008. Since the privatization of the DUI system, Salvadorans must travel to a major city to register or change the address on their DUI and pay \$12.50, a very high fee for most people. The new DUI is valid for 10 years, but tends to self-destruct before 10 years are up. ARENA, with ties to the production of DUIs, is the only party with access to the voters' list. With a TSE controlled by the Right, stolen identities, false DUIs and rumours of violence and fraud, it is not surprising that reputable surveys report over half the population does not trust the electoral system.

I spent the last day-and-a-half before

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the election in the municipality in which I'd be observing. I was placed in the department of La Libertad, in San José Villanueva, a small village surrounded by peasant communities eking a living from tiny plots of land.

*continued on next page*

# international

The high areas, public lands with sea views and refreshing breezes, are now private estates for rich people seeking country homes close to the capital. Some peasant communities have held out, but already private paved roads lead to gated communities that help themselves to the village's potable water source and river water for golf courses.

On the day of the election, I boarded the CIS bus from our hotel at 4:30 a.m., without time for even a coffee or bit of breakfast. Throngs of pedestrians were hurrying along still-dark sidewalks to the Feria or convention centre to set up thousands of voting tables. At 5:50 a.m., the four of us assigned to San José entered the school courtyard where 18 tables would receive all the voters of this small municipality. In front of each table was posted its list of voters, up to 400 per table. We looked for the bathroom; six stalls but no water (for a number two, you fetched a bucket of water from barrels outside, and by mid-afternoon, the water was gone and even locals avoided the area). I chose table "H" because it had a tree in front and a cement wall on which to sit. The doors opened to let the public in at 8:05 a.m., more than an hour late. I stayed with my table from 5 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., except for a breakfast and lunch break.

Ballots have no names, only the parties' flags in full colour. The party that wins the most votes wins all the seats on the municipal council. This means that the mayor and his councilors hold all the power. The importance of controlling a municipality should not be underestimated. If the municipality is small, a bus or two of previously registered non-residents can secure a victory. A party can also swing votes in its favour by selecting party supporters from other municipalities to act as election workers or observers. It is reported that most of the ARENA election workers in San Salvador were from outside the municipality. For the legislative elections, each department has a number of seats proportional to its population and each party gets the number of seats corresponding to votes obtained. The party with the most leftover votes gets the fractional seats. No vote is wasted. A single vote can give your party a seat in the National Legislature!

At 5 p.m. the doors closed and the process of vote-counting began at each table. It took about two-and-a-half hours to complete the whole procedure. A party observer suggested they count the ballots for mayor first. That election was more interesting for the local population. The ARENA mayor, after 18 years in power, was retiring. They did count the legislative votes first and the FMLN ranked first. When the municipal results also gave the victory to the FMLN, celebratory firecrackers, music and speeches exploded in the village square. We spent another hour inside watching as each table wrapped up the proceedings before stepping out to watch the celebrations, enjoy a late dinner, and a long drive back on narrow dark roads full of people, bicycles, horses, cows and dogs.



The hotel TV channels didn't include local TV. U.S.-based Spanish news channels offered few results, except for the FMLN's loss of the nation's largest municipality, San Salvador. ARENA won 121 municipalities; the FMLN won 96. For the legislative elections, FMLN elected 35 deputies with 42.60 per cent of the vote and ARENA elected 32 deputies with 38.56 per cent of the vote. No party won a clear majority (43 needed for most legislation; however, an ARENA/PCN alliance would achieve a simple majority of 43 for the right).

Fewer people vote in municipal elections than in presidential elections. Nationally, over 52 per cent of registered voters cast a valid vote. In San José Villanueva, it was 74 per cent. The vote was over 70 per cent in areas experimenting with residential vote.



Another limitation to the electoral process is the lack of advance polls and absentee ballots, which means that more than 2.3 million Salvadorans living in the exterior and those absent from their municipality on Election Day cannot vote.

parts of the country painted in ARENA colours. The challenges the new president faces seem insurmountable – but all is possible in a country where martyrs rise again in the people.

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Cecily Mills, who holds a PhD in Microbiology from U of A, had a varied career in teaching in high school, college and university, in English, French and Spanish. Among her present activist activities is lobbying to keep Alberta nuclear free.

The next day, each group of observers presented a report from which a press release was prepared for the following day. In San Isidro, Cabañas, a municipality with 6,506 on the voting list, a number of non-residents were bused in to vote. All parties except ARENA decided to close the polling station at 10 a.m. The TSE accepted the decision. The election was held the following Sunday under a great deal of security. Five hundred more persons voted for mayor than for members of parliament. ARENA held on to the municipality, re-electing the same person for mayor for a fifth term of office with 444 more votes than the next candidate and with 45 per cent of the votes cast. In spite of the security and having to cast votes two Sundays in a row, 58 per cent of eligible voters participated in the second election. Unfortunately, this municipality is in the area exploited by the Canadian mining company Pacific Rim. ARENA was not expected to oppose the mine.

FMLN presidential candidate Mauricio Funes consistently polled higher than ARENA, but the January election, many thought either of the two candidates could obtain 50 per cent of the votes plus one. From the sparse news I gleaned in Brazil (where I was on March 15), and then in the U.S. and Canada, the winner was Mauricio Funes, who was described by media outlets as leftist, communist, guerilla, Marxist. He is none of these things.

On Saturday, March 21, more than 70 members of the Edmonton Salvadoran community and supporters heard Salvadoran Guillermo Denaux, a social justice advocate formerly with fair-trade NGO FLO International, analyze the political and economic situation of his country. The victory of the FMLN and Funes' stirring speech calling for reconciliation and the creation of a society that cares for the poor lifted hearts heavy with 30 years of repression, but what about the next days, weeks, months, years? Denaux pointed out that 49 per cent of voters voted for ARENA; the five families of El Salvador's financial oligarchy reject the FMLN; the biggest newspapers, the most watched TV channels are virulent attackers of the FMLN; the Left does not have a simple majority in the Legislature; support for the FMLN is uneven with large

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## international

# Global boomerang: The price of greed

RANDY STEINHAUER

Many have considered the crowning achievement of so-called “free-market” neoliberal economics to be the global integration of trade and investment, presented as the best hope for raising the standard of living for the impoverished masses around the world. Nowhere has this been more obvious than in the push for “free-trade” agreements and open investment by international financial institutions. The global economic meltdown, which is wreaking havoc in both developing and developed countries around the world, is a direct consequence of this policy. Canada, ironically, has been both a victim and victimizer in this process. As one of the world’s wealthy countries, we are complicit in the ongoing pillaging of the poorer nations of the “Global South,” but in turn we find ourselves increasingly an economic colony of the U.S., particularly in Alberta.

## A useful fiction

The beneficial effect of development and industrialization through “free trade” is a sacrament for neoliberals. This is based on the specious application of David Ricardo’s theory of Comparative Advantage. According to this early 19th Century economist, the general wellbeing of all countries will increase if they concentrate on producing what they can most efficiently produce, with the least opportunity cost, and then trade freely without restrictions for what they need. In reality, as economist Ha-Joon Chang describes in *Bad Samaritans*, this merely keeps a country at the same level of economic development rather than allowing it to further industrialize. Neoliberal economists constantly preach the virtues of free trade to the developing world. However, Britain and the U.S. only adopted free-trade policies after they had achieved market dominance through tariffs and subsidies to encourage their infant industries. The same is generally true of postwar successes such as Western Europe and South East Asia. China and India are paraded by neoliberals as free-trade models for developing countries, but China used high tariffs to build its industrial base and imposed foreign ownership limits and local content requirements. India’s high-growth rate began before the free trade era and it still maintains manufacturing tariffs and severe restrictions on direct foreign

investment. Both have achieved growth by engaging in gradual, controlled trade liberalization, not the surrender demanded by global investors.

Additionally, as Ricardo pointed out, the principle of Comparative Advantage only works to everyone’s advantage if capital (i.e. investment money) is immobile and cannot move from high-wage to low-wage countries. This is now an absurdity with US \$2 trillion a day racing through the world’s computerized trading networks. Fund managers and financiers will claim this as a benefit to the countries receiving their money, but 95 to 98 per cent of this “investment,” especially in currency trading, is actually just speculation, being invested for a few days or even just a few hours. Far from being beneficial, this “hot money” can be pulled out as fast as it flows in, leading to the destabilizations and collapses that characterized Latin American and South East Asian economies in the 1990s. The countries that best survived these upheavals, such as Chile or Malaysia, either had some form of currency controls or re-imposed them, defying the dogma of neoliberal economists. It is the built-in volatility and instability of the global markets which allows speculators to extract their profits.

The change in rules allowing unrestricted capital mobility in developing countries were a major focus of the wealthy nations’ neoliberal policies. This mobility lets investors pursue whatever investments will maximize their profits but the threat of capital flight by this money holds countries hostage and serves to dissuade them from banning sweatshops or enacting environmental regulations. The “development” this brings often bears a striking resemblance to good old-fashioned colonial exploitation. As Asad Ismi relates in the February 2009 issue of the *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives’ Monitor*, Canadian mining corporations have been active around the world, ravaging the environment and killing indigenous populations that stand in the way of their operations, often in collusion with corrupt governments.

## Race to the bottom

This opening of developing nations’ economies has often been forced upon them by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Countries become enmeshed in debt to these American dominated financial institutions and this leverage is then used to impose a

one-size-fits-all Structural Adjustment Program upon them. Under this “reform” the financial and banking sectors, as well as other industries, are forced open to foreign investors. In addition to losing control over investment, these countries are coerced into a program of privatization, elimination of food subsidies for the poor, and cuts to education. Furthermore, farmers are often diverted from local food production to growing cash crops for export to service the debt, undermining the country’s food security.

The exploitation of developing countries by Western corporations has also been facilitated by the “free trade treaties” such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Promoted relentlessly by the economic elites and corporate media as bringing prosperity, these treaties do little to limit unfair trade practices such as huge U.S. government subsidies to their agribusiness exporters. Instead, they empower foreign corporations, giving these companies the right to sue countries, either directly or through their governments before secretive trade tribunals. These have the power to impose penalties for environmental, labour, cultural or any other “non-tariff barrier to trade” laws that might threaten potential corporate profits. This elevates the rights of these companies over national sovereignty. Canada, if it loses any suits brought by American corporations under Chapter 11 of NAFTA, is expected to immediately comply or face trade sanctions, but the U.S. freely chooses whether or not to conform to rulings against it, as the softwood lumber dispute illustrates.

NAFTA further limits Canada’s ability to regulate its own resources. Over 60 per cent of Alberta’s oil production and almost 60 per cent of our natural gas are exported to the U.S. As the Parkland Institute’s Gordon Laxer has repeatedly pointed out (much to the evident discomfort of Conservative MPs) under NAFTA’s proportionality clause we can not reduce our exports without a proportional reduction in our own use of these resources, even if we begin to suffer shortages. This may lead to ever increasing reliance on oil from Alberta’s tar sands as conventional production declines.

NAFTA was sold to Canadians as being necessary for attracting vital American investment to create new jobs and wealth. As author Mel Hurtig has observed, this money has gone overwhelmingly to buying

up existing Canadian companies, not creating new ones, further hollowing out our economy. The weakening of Canada’s economic base under NAFTA has been accelerated by our return to a role of provider of raw materials to U.S. industries rather than developing our economy with value-added higher wage manufacturing jobs here, as in Alberta’s export of tar sands crude to the U.S. for refining. “Free traders” attribute robust Canadian exports to the U.S. during the ‘90s to NAFTA, but economists ascribe almost all of the increase to the weak Canadian dollar, making exports cheaper.

These treaties have been instrumental in the global corporate race to the bottom as developing countries vie to see which can offer transnational corporations the lowest wages, weakest pollution laws, and biggest tax breaks. The “free trade” treaties beloved by neoliberal economists and the corporate media have far more to do with neocolonial economic control over the developing world than with removing any actual barriers to trade.

Perhaps the most absurd proclamation by the high priests of globalization was the dawn of a new world, united by trade, where nation-states and their borders would no longer matter. There seems to have been some rethinking on this subject post 9/11.

## Greed...maybe not so good after all?

Things haven’t been going well for the global financial community. Debt bondage, a major force for the imposition of neoliberal policies in the developing world, is being sidelined in Latin America, with Venezuela using some of its oil wealth to bail Argentina and Bolivia out from their IMF captivity. Additionally, South America, previously a major World Bank borrower, has drastically reduced new loan acceptance. The 2008 Geneva round of WTO ministerial trade talks, the centerpiece of globalization, collapsed. The Free Trade Area of the Americas, the attempt to extend NAFTA to virtually all of North and South America, is moribund, thanks to rising resistance in Latin America. Instead, countries are moving toward regional trade treaties such as South America’s Mercusor trading zone.

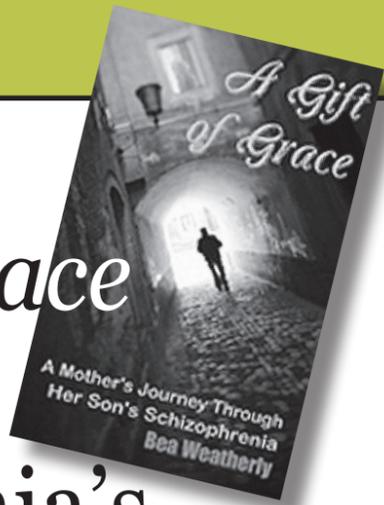
The liberalization and interlinking of the world’s financial and investment sectors so fervently pursued by the financial elites has ensured that destabilizations and insolvencies in one country are easily propagated throughout the world in this global casino. The financial integration and linking of worldwide markets needed to better exploit the developing world has guaranteed that the current economic debacle is global in scope.

*Randy Steinhauer (a.k.a. ‘Radical Randy’) is an Edmonton activist and author of The Edmonton Social Justice/Activist Contact & Resource Handbook. More information on economic and social justice issues may be found at <http://activistresources.raisemyvoice.com>*



## arts

# A Gift of Grace illuminates schizophrenia's impact on families



JAMAL ALI

Calgary author  
Bea Weatherly  
courageously  
describes coming to  
terms with her son's  
debilitating mental  
illness and addiction

In *A Gift of Grace* (Upside Publishing and Productions, 2008), author Bea Weatherly shows her courage in revealing a secret that most would hide in shame. The Calgary author, who raised her family in a small Alberta town, is the mother of a son with schizophrenia who spent years coming to terms with the disorder and liberating herself from its stigma.

Covering a period of 28 years, the author tells of her journey with her son as a child and as an adult. The book reads like a journal, and covers her family history chronologically. At the start of her journey, Weatherly was a public school teacher raising three children together with her husband in small town Alberta. She had expectations of an ordinary life for her and her family. As time unfolds, Weatherly's idyllic life is turned upside down, as her son, Edward, battles both schizophrenia and substance abuse.

A gifted musician and artist, Edward first attempted to manage the debilitating symptoms with street drugs. His strange behaviour became apparent to Weatherly and her family, who sought professional help. But like many people with mental illness, he initially struggled to accept the diagnosis of schizophrenia and became non-compliant with his prescription medication. Despite the family's efforts, they couldn't convince him to take prescription medication, not the street drugs, and Edward ultimately became homeless, which isn't unusual for those with untreated mental illnesses.

The impact of Edward's disorder was not only painful for him, but also for his

mother. As a caring, loving, and devoted mom, Bea tells of her tribulations in this beautifully written work. What is so remarkable about Bea is her strength in withstanding the ordeals of her son's illness. Though the book isn't written for public commendation, she deserves the admiration of the reader in learning to live gracefully and patiently with her son's disorder and fully accepting his mental condition.

After a decades-long roller coaster ride, Edward has recovered from the torments of schizophrenia with the love and support of his family. Today, he is pursuing a happy and healthy life and has seized control of his own destiny. However, like so many, he is still challenged by his incurable and treatable medical condition, but manages it well.

For families coming to terms with a loved one's schizophrenia, *A Gift of Grace* offers hope. For those who haven't been touched by this often-mystifying disorder, the book gently explains one of the most stigmatized mental illnesses. This compelling and compassionate read is also an optimism-booster for those who're recovering from mental illness and/or addictions.

For more on Bea Weatherly and her book, go to [www.beaweatherly.com](http://www.beaweatherly.com).

*Jamal Ali is a writer and mental health advocate residing in Calgary. His articles have been published in Schizophrenia Digest, Alexandra Musings, The Calgary Herald and other publications.*

## We Know

By Randy Steinhauer and Paula E. Kirman

*You tell us not to protest  
The gross hoarding of ever more wealth  
By those who already have too much  
Because we'll all be bathed in the gentle rain  
Of trickle-down.  
...But we know it's just a scam.*

*You tell us we need  
Our hydrocarbon way of life  
As the planet melts.  
It's not really happening,  
Or industry's not to blame,  
Or it'll be good for us.  
...But we know it's just a con.*

*You tell us to fight the next good war  
Against the latest enemy over there.  
Never mind that you helped create the monster  
You now claim hides under our bed.  
The poor should do the fighting  
And it's just a coincidence when the corporations cash in.  
...But we know it's just a lie.*

*So go ahead you movers, shakers, and policy makers.  
The same tired story  
Just never gets old.  
As long as you can keep doing  
Business as usual  
You think we'll go along as always;  
Your silent partner in the charade you dance.  
Blinded by your own greed  
You can't see it coming.*

*Just remember  
...We know.*



Photo courtesy of  
Paula E. Kirman/  
RaiseMyVoice.com

Paula E. Kirman is an Edmonton-based writer, editor, photographer, musician, and media activist. She documents the local activist scene in pictures and videos at [www.raisevoice.com](http://www.raisevoice.com).

Randy Steinhauer (a.k.a 'Radical Randy') is an Edmonton activist and author of *The Edmonton Social Justice/Activist Contact & Resource Handbook*. More information on economic and social justice issues may be found at <http://activistresources.raisevoice.com>

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#### Other Issues

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\* this report can be downloaded free as a pdf on our website at [www.ualberta.ca/parkland](http://www.ualberta.ca/parkland)  
+ this report is free upon request for sponsoring members (who donate more than \$120/year)

In addition to reports and books, Parkland's staff, speakers and research associates write numerous op-eds, articles and presentations. Here is the list of what has been posted on our website [www.ualberta.ca/parkland](http://www.ualberta.ca/parkland) since the last *Post*. These items can be downloaded for free. Many have been emailed to our list-serve. If you do not have access to these electronic resources, please contact the Edmonton office for copies of articles you are interested in.

**New Report:**  
**Breaking the Cycle: Stimulus with Responsibility, Stewardship, and Sustainability**  
by Greg Flanagan and Diana Gibson, April 1, 2009

**Parkland Op-Ed:**  
**Yesterday's Fuel, Yesterday's Deal**  
by Gordon Laxer, March 25, 2009

**Parkland Op-Ed:**  
**Oil and Gas Incentives Deliver Poor Return**  
by Diana Gibson and Ricardo Acuña, March 9, 2009

**On YouTube:**  
**Diana Gibson (clip), Beyond Band-aids and Bailouts**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sc3ACaxnhM>, April 9, 2009

**On CBC Radio:**  
Parkland Institute's Research Director, Diana Gibson, was on CBC's The Current. To listen to her segment – part three visit the CBC website at: <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/2009/200904/20090409.html> April 9, 2009

**Bi-weekly Issues Column:**  
Ricardo Acuña writes a regular column for *Vue Weekly* called *Front Issues*. Here are a few of his most recent columns:

**Right out from under us**  
Sale of Epcor's power generation highlights the danger of corporatizing public utilities  
Week of May 21, 2009, Issue #709  
<http://www.vueweekly.com/article.php?id=12025>

**Another contentious issue, another phony consultation**  
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Week of May 7, 2009, Issue #707  
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## What do you think?

Parkland Institute is considering the  
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## Pencil Us In to Your Calendar...

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