



Lana, Vic and Judy Brownoff, Strawberry Festival, Spring 2008

WHAT WOULD VIC DO?

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Saanich lost what many say was one of its most valuable assets this past month. Councillor Vic Derman died in his sleep at the age of 72 on March 17, 2017.

As the community comes to understand what has been lost and mourns the passing of their advocate, friend, teacher, ally and family member, *Saanich Voice Online* asked Saanich South MLA,

Lana Popham to reflect and share on her relationship with the 15-year Councillor and friend and what she thought his legacy will be. Here's what she had to say.

by Lana Popham, MLA, Saanich South

How/when did you meet Vic Derman?

I met Vic during the run-up to the 2005 Saanich

Municipal election. It was my first foray into politics and I didn't really know anybody in the political ring. After the first all-candidates meeting he told me that he was happy to see a young woman entering politics with a passion for the environment. He took me under his wing for the rest of that election and we became fast friends after that.

What did you learn from Vic?

After the election, which I lost, I was invited to sit on the Planning Transportation and Economic Development Committee with Saanich and Vic was the Chair. Even though I had a degree from UBC with a focus on urban planning, I learned more from Vic about how a municipality works than I could have done by getting a Masters degree.

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SHARED SERVICES REPORT - NOT TO BE RELEASED BEFORE THE ELECTION

by Roger Stonebanks, citizen reporter

The provincial government's shared services report for the Capital Region will not be released publicly until after the May 9 BC election, *Saanich Voice Online* can disclose.

The report has been expected to be released for some time including in late March. Green Party leader Andrew Weaver raised it in the legislature on March 16. He said the report has been available since last October and asked, "Could the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development [Peter Fassbender] please explain why this report has not been released and when he is planning to do so." Fassbender replied, "Indeed, the report is being finalized. It is being reviewed. I have communicated this with the mayors in the region that that report will be brought forward when that final review is done, and then it will be shared publicly as well."

Weaver commented later, "I was very unsatisfied with the response I received."

On March 23, Saanich Voice Online enquired of the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development about the report and was told this in a short statement late Friday (March 24):

"Ministry staff are carefully reviewing the consultants report, which provides an in-depth summary of the broad spectrum of information gathered and analyzed, including input from local governments, stakeholders and citizens.

"As the review will take a number of weeks and extend into the election period, the report will be shared shortly after the interregnum when government is formed. The Minister has been in touch with mayors and the [CRD] board chair to this effect."

Interregnum? It means, says the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, "An interval when the normal government is suspended especially between successive reigns or regimes." In other words, "after the interregnum when government is formed" means - after the May 9 election. The Writ that formally calls the election will be "dropped" on April 11 and after that normal government is suspended until after the election.

The BC government announced in June 2016 that two consultants will work with Capital Region municipalities on exploring potential ways to integrate services and government. The announcement made no reference to amalgamation. The consultants are Urban Systems and Circle Square Solutions and Dale Wall, a former BC government deputy minister, is project team leader.

The government announcement then stated, "Recognizing that local governments make their own decisions about integrated services and governance, the [Capital Integrated Services and Government Initiative] will gather facts and facilitate dialogue between local governments. The Province will not impose an outcome. The consultants will also engage stakeholder organizations to gather feedback on perceptions of the issues and opportunities facing local governments in the area." After the report is released, "local governments in the region will decide on the next steps," said Fassbender." This statement has been repeated since June 2016 by the government.

Go online to www.saanchivoice.ca for more on governance and amalgamation in the Capital Region.

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RETURNING HOME TO COMMUNITY— A LOOK AT COHOUSING

by Michele Murphy

Barb Whittington says the biggest surprise most people have when they learn more about the cohousing model is that privacy and autonomy are most-often the priority of the cohousing members, followed by connection to community and environmental footprint. This is where the conversation about creating a community in which to live, and thrive together, begins.

And beginning that conversation is just what Whittington and co-founding member of Saanich Peninsula Cohousing, Tracy Mills, have been doing for the past 14 months. Together along with 25-30 other future equity members, they will create their custom-built community on the Peninsula within the next two to three years.

Cohousing is not a new model, and in fact it might be described as returning to the villages of the past. Its resurgence began in Denmark almost 50-years ago and has been gaining in popularity in Europe, the US and now in Canada with BC taking the lead as pioneers in the Canadian movement.

Saanich Peninsula Cohousing describes a cohousing

community as a neighbourhood designed and developed by its members to combine the independent autonomy of private homes with the social benefits of a congenial and energetic community. Whittington says one of the most significant differences between these developments and ones that are built by developers for profit (and often some contribution to the community), is that the 'developers' will be the ones living in their creation, some for the rest of their lives.

Cohousing is not new to the Island. Sooke is home to the Island's first completed Seniors' Cohousing project. Harbourside Seniors' Cohousing owner/members took occupancy in January of last year, and the development now has a wait list of more than 200 people says Whittington.

Saanich Peninsula Cohousing is one of two new co-



Saanich Peninsula Cohousing co-founder Barb Whittington. photo credit Steve Haywood

housing initiatives currently underway on the Island with a second seniors' cohousing project underway in Sooke.

Cohousing isn't for everyone. It's market housing, at market rates, so you need to be able to buy in. And while the builds tend to cost less than other

quality new developments as profit is not part of the costs of purchase, it's not considered 'affordable housing' necessarily. Whittington says that, "The real savings come after move-in as most see the associated costs of running and maintaining a household drop as

much as 50 per-cent." The cohousing project founding members are hosting several free and open to the public information sessions, the next being offered in Saanich. On hand will be Margaret Critchlow, Prof Emerita, Anthropology, York University, co-founder of the Canadian Senior Cohousing Society and Harbourside owner/member speaking on the cohousing movement and answering all questions.

The Saanich Peninsula project is still in its infancy. They have a long list of interested people and five invested associated members. What they do know is that it will be built within walking distance to one of the three villages on the Peninsula, and it will be home to between 25 and 35 families. The rest is up for discussion. Go online to www.saanichvoice.ca for links to more info.

Saanich Peninsula Cohousing Info Session

FREE - Registration appreciated
Saanich Commonwealth Place
Royal Oak, Victoria

Sun April 23 | 2 pm
saanichpeninsulacohousing.com

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WHAT WOULD VIC DO? CONT'D



Vic Derman died Friday March 17, 2017 at the age of 72.

What did you learn from Vic? *cont'd from page 1*

We enjoyed so many chats about smart growth planning and making decisions based on long term outcomes. Vic instilled in me that politics was not necessarily about winning or losing an election, it was more about influencing change for the long haul. I think about that a lot and his words motivate me to keep plugging away.

He seemed to have a love of Saanich. Did he express that to you, and how?

Vic absolutely loved Saanich. He was dedicated to making Saanich better 100% of the time. He would never let a "teachable moment" pass by regardless of who he was speaking to. We had many discussions about how Saanich had the foundations in place to be a "natural city" but we were dropping the

ball due to short term decision making. The Uptown Shopping Centre was one of his favourite topics and he was continually disappointed that we had created a car-centric development at a time when we should be moving away from this sort of planning.

Was there a favourite meeting, ride, visit, moment?

Vic and I liked to have meetings over lunch at Red Fish Blue Fish downtown. I loved this as it meant we could share a bike ride to get there. I consider myself to be a pretty avid cyclist and 20 years younger than Vic...but I could barely keep up with him on those rides! I used to smile as I watched him barrel past the crowds on the Galloping Goose. It was Vic living and enjoying the results of regional planning that he believed in.

Did you ever agree to disagree?

Nothing ever got in our way as friends, even though he was non-partisan. When I became a provincial politician and chose a party to run with, Vic made it very clear that he supported me but would have to refrain from supporting me politically. This didn't surprise me. That being said, we had many political discussions, and he never missed an opportunity to push the envelope on sustainability at the provincial level. I counted on him for that.

What do you feel was his greatest challenge?

Vic was ahead of his time and that was his challenge. To sustain his commitment and to continue the good fight in the face of naysayers probably took a toll. Sometimes I could tell it was wearing on him and I hear see his frustration, but that never lasted long.

What legacy do you feel Vic has left his community?

I think one of Vic's legacies is that he has changed the working language in the Saanich Chamber. I think his influence will be long-lasting.

How could Saanich and the CRD best honour Vic Derman.

I believe the best way to honor Vic is to support progressive decision makers around the council table, so when faced with a tough decision, they will ask themselves, "What would Vic do?"

Gary Holman, MLA
Saanich North and the Islands

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