

north shore news

Hey there, millennials - vote Yes, obvi

[Andy Prest](#) / North Shore News

March 22, 2015 12:00 AM

OK, young adults - I'm speaking directly to you now. I have an important call-to-action for you that will effect your future happiness.

Can you see me over here? I know, I know - you haven't picked up a hard-copy newspaper since you used one to make a papier-mâché Pokémon in kindergarten. Don't worry - I'll post this online so you can read it while avoiding face-to-face interaction with your family.

Speaking of old people, you can read this too, older adults, but please save your tsK-tsking for Facebook where no one under the age of 30 will ever see it.

Anyway, here's your call-to-action, you wrinkle-free young wonders: you need to vote Yes in that transit plebiscite your poli sci professor keeps yakking about, and you need to convince everyone you know to do the same. Why? Well, let's take a look at some of the awesome perks young people have been given recently in British Columbia. In the past 15 years the average tuition cost for undergraduate students has basically doubled, up to \$5,118 in 2014-15. Meanwhile minimum wage, at \$10.25 per hour, hasn't budged in three years and is just five cents away from being the lowest rate in Canada. But good news on that front: this September the provincial government is going to bump it up, a whopping raise of. .. 20 cents per hour! Time to start house shopping!

And for those of you who were lucky enough to make it through university without selling both kidneys, how's that student debt feeling right now? Kind of heavy, isn't it. You better not slack on the payments, though - Christy Clark's government is proposing new legislation that would allow ICBC to withhold your driver's licence if you have missed student loan payments. That's super thoughtful - what better way to help someone get back on the path to success than to take away their transportation?

Well, at least you can

shoosh your blues away doing your favourite thing, snowboarding on the North Shore's beautiful mountains. Oh, right. .. those are a little rocky too this season. In fact, this winter was the warmest in terms of global average temperature ever recorded. And globally, according to NASA, 2014 was the warmest year measured in the modern record. And nine of the 10 warmest years in the modern record have occurred since 2000. But those warm temperatures are probably just a coincidence and have nothing to do with climate change stemming from all the awesome things the old-man leaders of today are pumping into the atmosphere. Right?

Serious quick rant: do you ever feel like the frog in the proverbial pot of boiling water? Do you, like me, have that nagging feeling in the back of your mind that we're all going to be underwater, burnt to a crisp, or living in suddenly balmy Tuktoyaktuk in 30 years? That's one more wonderful present to you, young people, from the old people running the show.

Anyway, if only there was something you could do that would actually, in a small but very real way, contribute to the reversal of some of these buzz-killing trends. Oh look, here comes a regional plebiscite - albeit a vague, weirdly worded and potentially non-binding one - that is asking us whether we want

to add half a cent to the sales tax to fund a whole host of transportation infrastructure upgrades ranging from all types of

public transit to road improvements to bike lanes. Transportation upgrades help everyone - fewer cars means less traffic jams, obvi - but in particular young folks who can't afford or just don't want to own a car. And look at all these great infrastructures in the proposal - finally, something going our way. Or is it? Polls leading up to the plebiscite, which is being conducted through mail-outs from now until May, show that the No side has a big lead. The only age group that is polling on the

Yes side is the 18-34 group. That's us! (I'm 34, just made it.) Good job, us! But it appears we need to do more. Way more.

If you still need to be convinced that Yes is the right way to vote, ask yourself whom you would like to align yourself with. On the Yes side is the David Suzuki Foundation.

"(Voting Yes) is the biggest thing you can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Metro Vancouver," the foundation stated in a recent release.

Then there's North Vancouver-born author Charles Montgomery, the guy who practically wrote the book on happiness. Seriously - he has a book

on urban planning called, would you believe, Happy City.

In a National Post op-ed Montgomery argued that "by most measures, a No result in the plebiscite will make the average person poorer, sicker, less free, more frustrated and, yes, less happy in the long run. Yet this is exactly where the polls show the city is headed." Montgomery also noted that people who live in car-dependent neighbourhoods tend to die four years sooner.

Thanks for the pep talk, Captain Bringdown!

Other Yes proponents include the B.C. Federation of Labour and B.C. Chamber of Commerce, Port Metro Vancouver, Disability Alliance B.C.

and, awesomely, the B.C. Ready-Mixed Concrete Association, among dozens and dozens of other organizations across the political and social spectrums.

So who is actually pushing for the No side? The biggest name on that ledger seems to be the Canadian Taxpayers Association which, as far as I can tell, is just an old Speak Spell that has been programmed to say taxes bad over and over. "Taxes! Bad! Taxes! Bad! Taxes! Bad!" And so forth.

It seems like an easy choice, right? Sure, TransLink has flaws and it's weird that the SkyTrain can break down just because it's run by a computer that's older than Justin Bieber and just as temperamental. But this money is not earmarked for TransLink in particular but rather to build very specific things that will make our region better in many ways.

Find your ballot and vote Yes. Find any old person you know who wants to vote No and ask them why they want to - in the wonderful parlance of our time - throw so much shade at us young people just trying to get by in a world we can't afford. Tell them not to be such a h8tr. Then give them a wink, a knowing smile, and tell them you know they'll do the right thing to help the future of this beautiful chunk of land that we all love.

aprest@nsnews.com

© 2015 North Shore News