

north shore news

CAROLAN: Burkas pose unsettling questions

[Trevor Carolan](#) / North Shore News

August 3, 2014 12:00 AM

"We have become trivial. We don't nurse the things that really should count."

- Rex Murphy

Golden summer finally, and the North Shore's excellent rhythm of community gatherings is always a barometer of what's on people's minds.

Density and traffic issues mostly, but in Deep Cove on a hot weekend it's a zoo. Cheapskate yachties duck out on marina fees and tie up long-term in the bay, bugging legitimate water-fun seekers. Squatter tubs tie up at the dock that no one from the district thinks of telling to move on, and there's a broken ladder on the divingraft that's a bad accident waiting to happen.

A hot-button topic?

Burkas. I've just seen them again at a local mall and Lonsdale Quay. They're becoming a scarily more familiar sight across town as well, in libraries and at community centres.

We are not speaking of simple head scarves. My own mother wore a scarf to Sunday mass as women commonly did during my boyhood. But covering up a woman from head to toe with an eye-slit in the 21st century? That's throwing in the towel to Osama bin Ladin and the usual Taliban thugs. Look at what's happened to London when a nation is too polite to say 'No.'

Aren't we just scared to speak up for fear of being ostracized by self-righteous Lefties?

Based on context - others close around them - one presumes they're new immigrants. How they lived in their own countries of origin is their business. But when does tolerance here in Canada give way to flat-out moral cowardice? Our Canadian Forces have just finished a hell-grind in Afghanistan. Weren't we told that Canucks were there to help bring democracy and freedom of education to young women in that society? Yet now we're expected to welcome the most backward customs of such societies here in Canada. What's wrong with this message?

Two municipal boundaries away in Richmond there's a different, but related story: Chinese-only language signs. It's indefensible! What's happened to acknowledging the language and customs of their new host country?

I'm with that courageous state minister in Denmark who spoke out against immigrant unwillingness to accommodate the social customs of their new home nation in Europe. Such behaviour, he said, is "Fundamentally offensive to the Nordic mind."

At last week's MusArt concert in Cates Park I considered this while admiring the new First World War memorial stone near the bandstand. It's a shared initiative by the Canadian Legion, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the District of North Vancouver. The jade stone and simple wording are profoundly stirring for anyone whose family elders sacrificed in that nightmare conflict so that we could progress forward, not backward into old tyrannies. The dedication ceremony is tomorrow, Monday, Aug. 4 at 11 a.m. with a Parade of Colours in which First Nations will share. Let your kids know who paid the price so they can keep on rocking in the free world.

In the district, the one serious issue now is big residential growth. Seymour's own Great Dane, Eric Andersen of the hardworking Blueridge Community Association, reminded me a little while back that since the adoption of the OCP, Mayor

Richard Walton and council have pushed way too far and too fast on housing developments this term. They've used the OCP to develop practically anything carte blanche. Andersen's dismay with this slate of big development clones is shared right across the municipality. A change of political faces is overdue.

Same deal in the city, however Mayor Darrell Mussatto and Coun. Craig Keating just suffered defeat on behalf of their bureaucrats and big property developers over OCP language to maintain long-term high density. Instead of the usual high-school popularity contest, for the first time in 25 years the city now has an actual fall election issue to debate.

Mussatto is a likeable guy from a friendly local family, but he's on the wrong side of the One Big Issue if someone is willing to challenge him.

Meanwhile, I've converted to watching Super Week bicycle road-racing. Talk about excitement! Gastown, Delta, UBC, Burnaby-Hastings, and White Rock have annual Criterion shorter haul competitions, 60 to 90 minute races. It's an eco-friendly, upbeat sport. B.C. provincial 'Crit' champion Dylan Davies from the Russ Hays/Accent Inns team likes to take the lead early and really gives fans a thrill. Could we see that happen here? Are there sponsors?

A cool, arty summer read? Try *The Life and Art of Harry and Jessie Webb* (Mother Tongue Press). Brilliant artists and jazz lovers, they lived life colourfully among familiar North Shore personalities - Bert Binning, Peter Aspell and Bruno and Molly Boback from Lynn Valley, Harry Redl, Al Neil, on and on. Harry morphed into landscape architecture with Desmond Muirhead and served with West Vancouver's advisory design panel, helping design Park Tilford Gardens, the Bayshore Hotel, Lion's Gate Hospital and BCIT, not to mention the interior of the beloved Pick-a-Pocket Bookshop on Marine Drive! The illustrations are spectacular.

poeticlicence.ns@gmail.comterse

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