

north shore news

Rise above that fog of somnolence

John Sbragia / North Shore News

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Bowen Island - Dear Editor: In a democracy, regardless of how much people complain, communities tend to get the governments they deserve. On the North Shore, the roughly one out of four electors who participate in civic elections generally tend to support candidates backed by vested interests whose primary concern is the profit motive - regardless of how much political spin and rhetoric is heaped upon it.

One of the dire results is that the integrity of your community plans - which are supposed to represent the democratic will of the people - becomes highly vulnerable and compromised. Another is a disconcerting increase in traffic and transportation problems due to over development practices which become unsustainable, along with myriad other social and environmental consequences.

When we add that pattern of lacklustre voting to the other levels of government and multiply it by all the other communities across North America and the rest of the world, we end up with the sad, self-destructive legacy that is being handed down to our children: the economic crash of 2008, the increase in poverty, a dwindling and struggling middle class, the massive degradation of our climate and environment, and the widespread destruction of our wildlife.

Is it any wonder our world is in such a mess when the great majority of its electorate abides in a fog of somnolence where it does not even bother to show up at the polling booth on behalf of themselves, our children and our children's children, and the world upon which we all live? The many Canadians who died in defending democracy, the lifeblood of our free society, must be spinning in their graves. The very least we can do to honour their memory and to help build a better world is to exercise our hard-fought democratic right to vote on election day.

We also need to elect independent-minded representatives who are not beholden to any vested interests, who seek balance in all issues and who wish to create a more

fully democratic society, a society aspiring to fulfill the meaning of democracy itself, which is "rule by the people" - not just at election time, but all of the time.

The people of the North Shore are the stewards of one of the most beautiful places on the face of the Earth. They cannot take it for granted but must stand up for the principles of democracy at every opportunity, and insist that their elected representatives do so as well. I also encourage the North Shore News and all educational institutions to take a leading role in a process of education and advocacy on behalf of a more fully democratic, and therefore more fully evolved society upon which depends our very survival.

In a democracy, the power always rests with all of us, but it can only manifest itself to the extent that we wake up, rise up and claim it, and to the extent that we care about the future of all of our children and the world in which they will live.

John Sbragia

Bowen Island

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