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north shore news

Zealots crowd out the considerate

[Trevor Lautens](#) / North Shore News

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The bicycle is one of the greatest inventions in history, a freeing vehicle, a pioneer emancipator of women - and now a vehicle of protest.

To start at the conclusion: The North Shore's nearest analogy to the gang warfare elsewhere in Metro is on the verdant slopes, notably **Mount Fromme, where some mountain bikers, hikers and residents are in a turf war that better get top priority for attention before there's serious injury or death.**

Attempts to satisfy these interests clearly have failed.

A bow, first, to those cyclists, especially commuters with welllit bikes and good road manners, who deserve - in law and in reciprocal manners - merited, very careful regard. But as always, a minority clique of zealots can always be counted on to crowd out the considerate and the conciliatory.

Not to keep you in suspense - and granting this isn't my personal or journalistic beat, and I'm past pedalling my four loved bicycles, least of all on steep forest trails - **I'm skeptical whether Mount Fromme's competing interests can peacefully share the same space. The urban bureaucrats' notion that walkers and cyclists share some kind of jolly camaraderie, presumably based on mutual contempt for the car, is delusional twaddle.**

Start here: I recently praised North Vancouver District Mayor Richard Walton. A reader - not, note well, the woman whose case is before the courts - sent a long, furious email slamming Walton and alleging cronyism with his "mountain biking buddies" of the North Shore Mountain Bike Association (which in fact posts a sober, sensible code of conduct. Is it followed? Well, we're talkin' human beings, like thee and me).

Before firing off a droll response, I dug a little. This reader has been the target of vile, vicious, profaneplus screeds (the c-word is winning disgusting currency) from mountain bikers around the world - braying bullies of the woods, cowards crouching behind the Internet's anonymity. There's a resemblance to the riproaring ski jocks who spatter their brains and others' on twisting mountain roads.

I also recalled the bike anarchists who, in Gregor Robertson's Vancouver, pressured city hall with organized rush-hour demos that screwed up vehicle drivers' lives and suppers.

Whatever has been done to keep the peace on North Shore slopes doesn't look like nearly enough. This cries out to be fixed.

Just going through the motions. West Van council is sure to approve Park Royal's expansion, no matter what neighbours or councillors say.

The plan is for two towers of 27 and 12 storeys, 251 residential units (about two and a half times the number for controversial Grosvenor Ambleside), 17,824 square feet of office space, total 300,000 square feet.

Thanks to the crazyquilt jurisdiction, if council doesn't ratify Larco's project on the old White Spot site at Taylor Way and Marine Drive, where town hall enjoys zoning and other municipal powers, why, the owners can just shrug and build elsewhere on land that Park Royal leases from the Squamish.

I'd guess the owning Lalji family would prefer building on the White Spot site. And it's beyond question that town hall, whatever public agony it displays, would too. It covets the tax revenue.

Agent y8Tb3, a knowledgeable devil, roughed out the taxes generated by the project. I lost track of the number of zeros.

And the traffic at Taylor Way and Marine Drive, cheek-by-jowl with the three-lane 1930s Lions Gate Bridge? Park Royal vicepresident Rick Amantea told a public meeting: "No one is more concerned about traffic at this corner than Park Royal."

Yes, what if the increasingly strangled North Shore bridges discouraged West End and other Metro shoppers, foiling Park Royal's goal of being a great regional shopping centre? Right, they can always take the bus. ... Without searching

through yellowing newspapers, I'm confident that no entertainment at West Van's Kay Meek Centre ever had the stunning hype given to The Goodnight Bird. (Which closes tomorrow night - so hurry, if it isn't sold out.)

With a blockbuster photo on the arts section front page, keyed to a glowing spread inside, the Vancouver Sun seized readers by the lapels and all but choked them into attending this North American premiere. Rare, perhaps unprecedented, for a play in a modest-sized venue in the 'burbs.

And the play? All theatre requires suspension of disbelief. This is a mighty chore here. Unless you know of a greying couple (Christopher Hunt and Nicola Cavendish) who'd react to a late-night entry by an apparently bipolar gent (Graham Cuthbertson) like. .. this. Even remotely like this.

But once past the initial obligatory full-press nudity and tediously conventional dirty-mouthing, Colleen Murphy's play seamlessly turns touching, poetic - though quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson and Emily Dickinson is as unlikely as Cavendish's splendour in the grass. Never mind. Cavendish, top of her game, meltingly makes it happen. Go see, if you can.

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