

## JAMES: Enjoy the moment, give new government a chance

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Just  
**ASKING**  
Elizabeth James



*"The 'red tide' washed up on the North Shore Monday night as all three ridings went to the Liberals. ...While pollsters were cautiously predicting a Liberal minority, few anticipated the 184-seat majority that swept the country."*

- North Shore News

The analogy reporter Brent Richter chose for his Oct. 21 front-page debriefing of the North Shore's Decision 2015 was a good deal more apt than the same-day one used in The Province where columnist Michael Smyth attributed the Liberal win to a "new wave of Trudeau-mania."

I lived through the mania on which middle-finger Pierre Trudeau rode to power and, while future events may prove me wrong, I sensed that a far different sentiment caused this year's red tide. Far from being mindless, celebrity-style fans, I heard traditional and brand new voters voicing their concerns at home, in supermarkets and coffee shops. Online and in the media, people were discussing real issues.

That said, a common thread throughout those discussions was whether voters should throw out some good Conservative candidates with Stephen Harper's sour bath water.

For me, the answer to that dilemma was this: for all the good points a Conservative candidate might have, if he was willing to allow Stephen Harper to deny him the right to answer questions at all-candidates' meetings, if constituents are only permitted to receive information from their government via a blizzard of preapproved, sanitized good-news junk mail, how could those candidates deserve the people's trust or votes?

Election results suggest many thousands of voters felt the same way.

So John Weston who, by all accounts had been an excellent West Vancouver MP and Mike Little, who did a bang-up job as councillor in the District of North Vancouver went down to defeat on the receding blue tide.

One of my own options, carefully studied, was to vote strategically – which party stood the best chance of ousting a party ruled by a "my way or the highway" prime minister?

Instead, after being sorely tempted right up to the day I cast my vote in the advance polls, I decided to vote solely on the basis of whether or not a candidate's views and party policies most closely matched my preferences. Win or lose, I wanted to feel good about my vote and, tide-less, I do.

I cannot end this deliberately short note about Decision 2015 without some reaction to another of Mike Smyth's comments in his Province column: "Now get set for the red ink to flow out of Ottawa, as Trudeau turns on the federal spending taps with billions of borrowed dollars."

Good grief! Barring some really sour grapes, the country in general is feeling an overwhelming sense of relief or, as one Saskatchewan voter put it, "I feel as though a weight has been taken off my shoulders."

Could we not just enjoy the moment and give our new government a fair chance? And to help things along – should my advice even be needed – all our new government needs to do in order to fund many of its promises, is to get out from under the multi-billion-dollar, no-tender decision to purchase much-troubled, inappropriate single-engine Lockheed-Martin F-35 fighter jets and rethink Canada's participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

And now for some follow-up words on tree issues:

It did not take long for four District of North Vancouver readers to comment – one with photos, one in person and two in detailed emails. One reader reminded me of an important issue I should have mentioned in the first column. Earlier this year, a large branch from a district-owned tree came down on that reader's family vehicle. The branch crunched body-work and broke a window.

Learning from past futile discussions with the district and since repairs were urgent, the owners filed an immediate ICBC claim.

While examining the vehicle to estimate the repairs, the claims adjuster remarked that ICBC "sees this all the time."

Municipalities deny responsibility; ICBC shoulders the expense, your insurance rates and deductibles increase, one less debit on local government books. Is ICBC ever repaid?

The other three readers gave varying but similar accounts of their experiences with costs resulting from district bylaws that ranged from \$400 up to estimates of \$2,000-\$3,000 for removal of a single tree.

As you might expect, these brief comments touch only the tip of the iceberg. Another column will be needed to address all the problems that ensue when municipal bylaws protect the wrong types of trees that are growing to inappropriate heights beside our suburban gardens.

*After 16 years with the multi-disciplinary Perinatal Programme of B.C. and later in various endeavours in the growing high-tech industry, Elizabeth James now connects the dots every second Wednesday on local, regional and provincial issues. She can be reached via email at [rimco@shaw.ca](mailto:rimco@shaw.ca) (<mailto:rimco@shaw.ca>).*

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