



THANKS FOR PROFILING THE NEED FOR better Alberta forest management (“Our vital forests and how Alberta mismanages them,” by Tadzio Richards, June). Like our threatened native fish, our endangered caribou reveal our forest use as unsustainable; they challenge us to learn to manage cumulative impacts so that we and many other species can thrive.

Woodland caribou need large areas of fairly intact older forests and wetlands—for food and to minimize overlap with deer, moose and their predators. Forests of clear-cuts and seismic lines need decades before conditions are suitable for caribou to recover. In highly disturbed Little Smoky–A La Peche caribou ranges in west-central Alberta, we unethically scapegoat wolves in a massive cull while habitat worsens.

Fortunately, solutions are within reach. The Alberta government has deferred new energy leasing throughout woodland caribou ranges and has paused logging in Little Smoky–A La Peche. However, existing leases continue to be developed. Alberta still needs to protect more high conservation value forests from industrial activity, and enforce definitive land disturbance thresholds. Maintaining biodiversity and ensuring the future of our species at risk, including bull trout and woodland caribou, must be given priority.

CAROLYN CAMPBELL,
Alberta Wilderness Association

TADZIO RICHARDS IS ONLY PARTIALLY right in accusing successive Alberta governments of mismanaging our forests. Uncontrolled population growth should also be blamed. Millions of new Albertans who arrived here since the early 1950s needed land and wood for housing, jobs and space for recreation. This put immense pressure on forests. If we wish to restore them, we need to find ways to control population growth.

SUDHIR JAIN, *Calgary*

RE: “THE NDP’S FIRST YEAR: A DIFFERENT Kind of Experience,” by Evan Osenton (May). I do not share Osenton’s optimism around the NDP, and have concerns that pet-project social issues may be trumping economic ones.

Yes, we elected three openly gay MLAs, as well as a significant number of women. That “accomplishment” had little to nothing to do with their gender or orientation and everything to do with provincial anger at the governing Tories. Is that a success for equality—or luck?

Given that MLAs are elected for a four-year mandate, providing maternity leave, in essence, leaves voters without representation for a significant period. Our legislature already sits for a low number of days (42 in 2014), and an MLA is one of the most important short-term positions a person can have. I doubt that pregnancy concerns are keeping young women out of office.

Deborah Drever’s Bill 204 was a hasty piece of legislation designed to manoeuvre her back into the good graces of the public (and into the NDP caucus). After all, who but the most misogynist of individuals could oppose a law that protects victims of domestic violence? Ablawg.ca, the U of C’s Faculty of Law blog, has an excellent write-up that shows the substantial flaws with this legislation.

The LGBTQ guidelines contain little that isn’t already done by caring school communities, but add that students need only self-identify as the gender to be accommodated. Given the fluid nature of gender and sexual expression during the formative teenage years, one hopes there would be support from psychologists for such a significant

leap as to change biological gender expression. Also, removing a parent’s right to know of such a decision undermines fundamental parental responsibilities. How can we enshrine a removal of that right? Schools already acknowledge when notifying a parent can cause issues for the child.

Social issues aside, I am pleased by the increase in Alberta Child and Family Tax Credits and the continuation of the PCs’ review of payday loan companies. Addressing poverty and the economy further would strengthen the NDP’s position and achievements.

JAMES TEMPLETON, *Calgary*

RE: BOOK REVIEW BY KATHERINE GOVIER

of Kathy Calvert’s *June Mickle: One Woman’s Life in the Foothills and Mountains of Western Canada* (April). The reviewer points out that some of the dialogue was invented. I would imagine this was done to better present June’s early life to the reader. The remarks seem more catty than objective. The reviewer is basically saying that any creativity involved in writing a person’s life story is forbidden, to keep it, in the purest sense, non-fiction or historically accurate. Tell that to all the ranchers across Alberta who loved the book.

To say the facts are muddled is well beyond the reviewer’s qualifications; she never met Mickle and doesn’t seem to understand the subject. This review comes across as a fiction writer complaining about the use of creativity in non-fiction. If anything is muddled, it’s the review.

DALE PORTMAN, *Cochrane*

KEVIN VAN TIGHAM (“THIS LAND”) MAKES

a number of suggestions for policy changes the province could implement to help meet climate objectives. I’d guess the government will have to be lobbied hard to get these ideas funded and operational. They would put people to work and do good for the land.

I’ve heard the Nature Conservancy is interested in projects that restore and protect natural areas, and I know Ducks Unlimited has some projects in Alberta. I wonder what’s going on with these projects and whether these groups

coordinate their work with others. *Alberta Views* is great at presenting all the arts, culture and social events taking place around the province. A review of all the environmental restoration projects would be of interest to me and maybe others. I appreciate Van Tighem’s knowledge, writing and concerns.

LINDA MUNROE, *Slave Lake*

RE: “THE CIVIL SERVICE: AFTER 44 YEARS of PC rule, can it adapt?” by Graham Thomson (Jan/Feb). I wish I were as optimistic as this article is in relation to the bureaucracy not being politicized and not showing loyalty to its previous masters, but I expect there are many instances of inaction by the bureaucracy that protect PC legacy and entitlement within agencies, boards and commissions and core government.

One example may be Alberta Innovates–Technology Futures (AITF). While Premier Notley was announcing the importance of pipelines to Alberta’s future, AITF was removing the CEO for the Canadian Pipeline Technology Collaborative. These events do not seem to align. When a person peels back the various layers of the AITF story, it’s hard to conclude that the bureaucracy is aligning with the government or taking action to make appropriate changes. In this instance, the civil service appears to be not working for what’s best for Albertans or what’s in the NDP’s best interests—the bureaucrats are protecting the PC legacy.

CURTIS KUZYK, *Calgary*

CORRECTION: (Jun 2016) Artist Renée Duval is represented by Herring Kiss Gallery, not Christine Klassen Gallery.

Alberta Views welcomes letters, but reserves the right to edit for clarity, brevity and legality. Please include your name and address.

208, 320 23rd Ave SW
Calgary, Alberta T2S 0J2
letters@albertaviews.ab.ca



Alberta Views is printed on a mix of recycled and forest-friendly paper.

2/3 PAGE
4.687" x 9.5"

FILE REQUIREMENTS

CMYK, High resolution (300 dpi)
Convert all RGB, spot and Pantone
colours to 4-colour process CMYK.

Other sizes are possible in this spread

ALBERTA.....	21	EDMONTON	18, 20, 24	LETHBRIDGE.....	26
CALGARY.....	18, 22, 24	FORT McMURRAY	25	UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA	26
CANADA	19	LEGISLATURE	21, 27	UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY.....	23

EYE ON ALBERTA

VOYAGEUR UPGRADER BY JOEY PODLUBNY
2014. Near Fort McMurray.



less than \$2-million annually. In addition, the government initially agreed to purchase all the equipment needed to operate the course, and then Kan-Alta would purchase this equipment from the province over a 10-year period, without interest and at prices that would be depreciated 10 per cent a year over the 10 years. If Kan-Alta had to purchase replacement equipment during this period, and its lease were not renewed, the government agreed to buy the equipment back at the original purchase price. Operators of similar publicly owned, privately managed golf courses in Alberta have described this arrangement as a “sweetheart deal.”

While there is no way now to determine how prevalent this kind of political cronyism was during the Lougheed–Getty era, it seems inevitable to some degree. Elected public officials do not forget the supporters who helped them win elections. And in Alberta there is considerable overlap between the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta and the various business elites around the province. Under these circumstances it would be surprising if personal contacts did not insinuate themselves into decisions about grants and loans. This is why the academic literature insists that arm’s-length, independent committees or boards should make such decisions. But even then it is still the government that makes the appointments....

The Lougheed and Getty governments’ efforts to replace oil and gas production with more technology-driven, less resource-dependent alternatives were largely unsuccessful. The economic “diversification” projects that proved successful were largely those that capitalized on the province’s existing strengths, and not just the Crown’s oil and gas reserves but private-sector expertise and capital. Forays into industrial laser technology and cellphones were simply no match for the economic opportunities to be had through the further exploitation of Alberta’s non-renewable resources.

EDMONTON



Old School, Bro

From a Kijiji ad posted in Edmonton on Jan 21, 2015, offering a 1990 GMC C/K 2500 pickup truck for \$1,800. The ad attracted 116,086 hits and was picked up by Business News Network and Huffington Post before disappearing from the site Jan 30, 2015.

Been laid off? Bank repo your jacked up F350? Fear not, my friend! You can still pull the babes with this classic GMC. That’s right, for one low payment of \$1,800 you can be cruising in this 1990 ¾ ton. Its old school patina ... will take you back in time to before you made big oil money. On the upside, gas is cheap again so you can really abuse the rebuilt 350 small block. It’s got 4:11 rears and a turbo 400 so you can get from 0–60 in the time it takes you to chug that second beer. The rear window has a slider so it’s easy to throw your empties in the back without even slowing down. With the money you save on truck payments there will still be some EI money left over for hookers and blow (not everything has to change, my friend).

CALGARY



Calling All Rich People

From “Arlene Dickinson on Calgary’s recession,” an op-ed by Arlene Dickinson, CBC News, Mar 21, 2016. Dickinson is CEO of Venture Communications and a former member of business reality show Dragons Den. In 2015 she opened District Ventures, a fund to support entrepreneurs in the “food and health sectors.”

The economic story of 2016 continues to be the price of oil. Will it go up? Will it go down? Albertans talk about oil like most Canadians talk about sports scores. While oil prices have become the topic of water cooler conversation, it’s also fuelling the province’s economic downturn and having a real impact on the lives of Albertans. Alberta lost 44,000 full time jobs in 2015, and in January, we lost an additional 20,000, helping push the province’s unemployment rate to 7.9 per cent in February, the highest since 1995. Some commentators have called for perspective, calling the downturn “cyclical”—but downplaying this recession as just another cycle is dangerous, and asks Albertans to accept what is unacceptable: an economy of boom and bust. It asks us to be complacent and to wait until the price of oil rebounds instead of being proactive, innovative and building on our strengths.

The reality is, high-net-worth individuals and commentators can dismiss this as merely another cycle because they either have the means to wait out the storm or it doesn’t impact them. They ask for perspective, while low- and middle-income Albertans experience the real-life consequences that often include being laid off. Let’s face it, it’s easy to ride out a cycle when you have \$25-million in your bank account, and it’s rational—albeit inconsiderate—to call for calm knowing that middle class Canadians will feel the brunt of future cycles if nothing’s done to cushion future downturns.

At the risk of sounding like a politician, Alberta can and must do better. We need to be realistic about how we can grow our economy. Let’s not re-invent the wheel. Let’s scale the assets we have. With more than 50 million acres of farmland used for crop and livestock production, together with the best-educated workforce in the country, Alberta is a province blessed with a unique range of natural, agricultural and human resources.

Building a stronger economy starts by adding value to our commodities here at home by refining, packaging and marketing them to consumers before we ship them abroad. In my view, so much as a stick shouldn’t leave this province without our first having added value to it.... The province needs to incentivize investment here in Alberta, and ensure public investments are deployed quickly to help homegrown companies succeed. While I believe government must lead an economic diversification agenda, the task of economic growth is the responsibility of all Albertans. It’s up to every Albertan who’s weathering this storm to contribute to their community and to boosting the economy.

Alberta is a province full of wealthy individuals. It’s time for

these individuals to step up and invest in the next generation of entrepreneurs. It’s time for wealthy Albertans to take time out of their day to mentor entrepreneurs and connect entrepreneurs with an idea, to people that can help. Businesses need to invest in innovation and continue to hire skilled workers, and Albertans need to “buy Alberta” to ensure those investments pay off. I’ve been remarkably lucky to call Alberta my home for over 50 years, and over that period, the notion of economic diversification is a topic we return to when fiscal outlooks are grim. It’s the buzzword on the lips of every politician when we’re in the midst of a recession, but real, tangible action to implement economic diversification strategies are almost non-existent....

Individuals, businesses and government need to step up. They need to work urgently and collaboratively to help our entrepreneurs grow, build on our strengths and diversify the economy. Alberta is blessed with tremendous natural resources that have helped us build a province from the ground up. We must not forget that we’re also a province of entrepreneurs, and when we invest in and nurture that unique and exciting identity, the rewards can be immense. I am challenging everyone: the government, the private sector and all Albertans to do their part in helping our entrepreneurs succeed. We cannot afford to view this downturn as just another cycle and we cannot afford to be complacent. The lives of too many Albertans depend on our courage and leadership.

FORT McMURRAY



Mushing to Diversity

From “The dogged determination to diversify,” by Theresa Wells, Fort McMurray Today, Mar 19, 2016.

The price of oil remains down and the talk of economic diversification remains high, although diversifying the economy in the north seems easier to talk about than achieve.

There is a perception that economic diversification must be expansive and broad, and yet some of the best avenues for diversification lie with local entrepreneurs. While sled dogs might not be the first thing one thinks of as a route for diversification, it was exactly what I was thinking this weekend when I sat in the touring sled owned by Christina Traverse of Mush McMurray and realized she is embarking on a very bold idea. Christina, a recognized and admired young dog musher, has been working with sled dogs for much of her life.

This past winter, however, Christina realized there was an opportunity to take three things she loves (her sled dogs, mushing, and our region and history) and turn it into a profitable enterprise, attracting not just local residents but potentially providing an additional attractant for those interested in tourism in northern Canada.... Determination

1/2 HORIZONTAL

7.125" x 4.625"

FILE REQUIREMENTS

CMYK, High resolution (300 dpi)
Convert all RGB, spot and Pantone
colours to 4-colour process CMYK.