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THE GAZETTE

JOURNAL OF THE B.C. LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

THE 2020 BRITISH COLUMBIA LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The 2020 cohort with the Honourable Darryl Plecas, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Karen Aitken, Program Director, and Dr. Gerald Baier, Acting Academic Director.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

from the editors to everyone.

Every intern cohort has a different experience of what the Legislative Assembly has to offer. Politics in British Columbia are dynamic and ever-changing, whether in response to a change in government, problems within the province, social movements, or global crises.

Our internship provided us with all of the aforementioned, including shifts in caucus dynamics, protests at the Assembly on our first day, and the COVID-19 pandemic. This year demanded more of everyone in British Columbia. Whether you are a public servant, an elected official, or a private citizen, learning to live with uncertainty is characteristic of this time.

While the pandemic presents challenges, we are lucky to live in a province that was both able to contain the virus effectively - in large part due to our healthcare heroes, including Dr. Bonnie Henry - and to have the Internship Program continue in a novel setting.

"Unprecented" may well be the defining word of our internship, but we found new ways to connect and continue our learning. Virtual seminars with academics and experts granted new insight into both British Columbia and federal politics. Remote working gave the interns new opportunities for growth as our caucus assignments required new kinds of support. While not the experience we expected, digital work humanized provincial and federal politics in a way that connected us more with each other, with our colleagues and mentors, and with the world around us.

We would like to acknowledge that the BCLIP operates on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen people, today known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations. Thank you, as always, to Karen Aitken, Jennifer Ives-Fournet, and Dr. Gerald Baier for their tireless efforts to make this experience fantastic, both remotely and in-person.

Thank you to our Ministries for providing a glimpse into normal work operations; thank you to all three caucuses of the Legislative Assembly for continuing to provide new challenges and learning opportunities from the comfort of our home offices; thank you to the Parliamentary Interns from Ottawa who made our star-studded virtual visit as seamless as possible; thank you to Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant, for his guidance during our Model Parliament; and thank you to the many mentors and professionals who offered their time to speak with us during a very unique time in history.

On behalf of the 2020 cohort, we'd like to extend our sincerest thank yous to everyone involved throughout our time as B.C. Legislative Interns. It was an experience we will never forget.

Sincerely,
Erin and Hailey

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

"It's the end of the world as we know it – and I feel fine."

A great lyric from a great song that resonates with me this 2020 Intern year. It has been a tumultuous and unusual year for the 44th class of BCLIP and everyone has risen to the challenge.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the world; how we work, how we socialize, how we behave. It has certainly changed the internship with a record number of Zoom academic presentations, Ottawa guests, political journalists and more. We were all grateful for the opportunity to have met our Washingtonian counterparts at the Legislature in Olympia. It seems eons ago that we could travel.

But as I say each year, BC's Legislative Interns are an incredibly talented bunch – creative, enthusiastic, determined and, I would add, resilient. Everyone has managed to stay connected, build relationships that will turn into lifelong bonds of friendships – and mostly online. Working remotely has been coined the "new normal", but I sincerely hope it is not indeed the "new normal" forever. We all need connection. The BCLIP is an excellent program for making connections – not just amongst the interns, but connecting the interns to MLAs, Ministry mentors, alumni and academics. It is a rich educational program that showcases democracy first-hand by offering the interns the opportunity to be a part of the complex work of governance, legislation, policy and decision making.

I know that the 2020'ers have learned many new skills during these unprecedented six months and I really hope they will look fondly on their time here. It has been disappointing to meet virtually for so many presentations since March, but with their newfound Zoom skills, I know they will be in demand. They have much to offer this great province and I have complete faith that they will succeed in making our world a better place for all.

- Karen Aitken, Program Director

I was thrilled to step in as acting director of the BCLIP this year. Well, what a year! Things started out innocently enough when we met in January for orientation and send-off to the ministries, but phase II was a real humdinger!

Program-wise, to say this has been a challenging year would be an understatement. The Speech from the Throne and associated protests made the start of caucus assignments a little unusual and personally challenging. I was most impressed with how the interns pulled together to communicate with one another and to be sure that issues and perspectives within the group didn't get left unexpressed or unresolved. Their maturity and care for each other had me in immediate awe.

Caucus time was complicated by the arrival of public health precautions related to COVID-19. Again, after the initial shock, they showed maturity and thoughtfulness beyond their years. Zoom became everyone's new best friend and I was impressed by their willingness to accept the necessary change in circumstances (and the lost opportunities of constituency and Ottawa travel) to focus on the educational mission of the program. I'll think very fondly of our regular Friday Zoom meetings (I think I can recall everyone's eclectic backgrounds from memory), and will always hope for students in my seminars to be as engaged and articulate as this group.

We tell interns, year after year, of the doors that open to you as a result of the goodwill towards the program. Karen and Jennifer and all of the program's friends in the Speaker's Office deserve most of that credit. But each cohort of interns continues to build that reputation through your ethical service, your long hours of hard work, your enthusiasm, and your dedication to your assigned tasks. Your next mission is to uphold the fine tradition of BCLIP alumni and give back to the program wherever you can. Don't worry, we'll find ways for you to help!

You'll always be a special class of interns given all of the challenges you had to face. However, I'm more and more certain that over time you will stand out not because of these circumstances, but because of your collective intelligence, wit, and commitment to contributing to British Columbia's public life.

- Dr. Gerald Baier, Acting Academic Director

NOTES OF THANKS

I would also like to note that I am transferring the baton next year and Jennifer Ives-Fournet will be managing the Internship. She will be an excellent mentor and has years of experience working with the Internship program. It has been such an honour and a privilege to work with 199 Interns since 2002. My heart is full with incredible friendships and I learned so much from all of you. I will still be here if you want to visit, but Jennifer will be an awesome new lead of the program.

- Karen Aitken, Program Director

Karen recently told me that when insomnia strikes, she counts interns instead of sheep. She starts with the 2002 program year – the first under her Directorship – and proceeds to name every single intern. One hundred and ninety-nine of you. I laughed heartily at this admission before being struck by a wave of panic over the inferiority of my own memory.

On reflection, this funny ritual is emblematic of something far more significant: the enormous energy, dedication, and pride with which Karen has led the BCLIP and which she invests in every single intern who walks through her door. I know that many alumni could speak to the meaningful ways in which Karen has impacted their lives and careers. Often mentorship turned into friendship once a program year had finished.

My involvement with the BCLIP began in 2012. I have been on scene for a mere eighty-four interns (a parental leave having somewhat lowered my would-be tally). In that time, I have developed an enormous amount of respect for the knowledge, perspectives, skills, and life experiences that interns bring to the program each year, and indeed the impact that alumni continue to have in our province and beyond. I look forward to leading the program next year and am reassured by the knowledge that Karen will be just down the hall.

On behalf of the BCLIP, I would like to thank Dr. Baier, who sprang into (virtual) action and called upon many colleagues and friends in the academic community to deliver varied and insightful seminars. These efforts kept the interns intellectually engaged and connected in the early days of working remotely.

To the 2020 interns, thank you for taking it all in stride. I wish you every success as you embark on new adventures and opportunities in these uncertain times. You are thoughtful, intelligent, resourceful, and kind; in short, you are exactly what our future needs.

- Jennifer Ives-Fournet, Program Manager

MEET THE 2020 INTERNS.

EMILIO CAPUTO

by Sam Harrison

Emilio joined the internship having completed his Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in History from the University of Northern British Columbia. Much to his chagrin, he is actually the *second* person from the small town of McBride to have participated in the internship program.

In January, Emilio's ministry placement was in the Inter-Governmental Relations Secretariat. In addition to the work of helping prepare for BC's participation in Council of the Federation meetings, he was also the only intern given his own office with a door, nameplate, and work-issued iPhone.

Emilio then worked in research and communications for the Government Caucus where, naturally suited to his northern roots, he worked closely with the MLAs from interior, north, and tri-cities area. His favourite parts were the informational meetings with cabinet ministers, the snowball fight that took place on the front lawn, and singing Nat King Cole covers with a band of MLAs.

"HE WAS THE ONLY INTERN GIVEN HIS OWN OFFICE WITH A DOOR, NAMEPLATE, AND WORK-ISSUED IPHONE"

Along with his podcast-worthy voice and slew of hilarious nicknames, he maintained a small community of sourdough starters in his fridge, which he gladly shared and perhaps unfortunately started Sam's sourdough baking addiction. Outside of work, he loves gaming, parkour, and cooking up "that old-world Nonna's Italian food".

Emilio had grand travel plans to see Europe, unfortunately cancelled by the global pandemic, following the conclusion of the internship program. Instead, he'll be looking for work in public policy, with a focus on international affairs.

ERIN SPENCE

by Maliki Suppin

Originally my office buddy and later my Zoom confidant, Erin Spence has graced the internship with her deceptive humour (mostly at my expense), a deep understanding of politics, and meticulous research skills. Known as Parksville's political science pundit, Erin provided the interns with education on electoral reform, the latest fisheries gossip, and much-appreciated advice on working in government. Erin was able to provide this advice due to her time with the Department of National Defence and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans while studying political science at the University of Victoria.

While Erin's educational and work experience provided tremendous value to the program, it was her kindness, humour, love for others, determination, and infallible work ethic that has made and will continue to make an impact on those who are fortunate to work with her. This impact was especially felt by both Stephen Bagan and I during the caucus placement. Stephen and I would often mention how Erin "carried" us through some of the more meticulous and challenging research tasks, which we are both extremely grateful for. Erin's colleagues also felt this impact during her ministry placement with Attorney General and her caucus placement with BC Liberal Research.

"SHE KNEW WHAT TO DO, HOW TO GET IT DONE, AND ALMOST ALWAYS BEAT A DEADLINE"

Colleague and mentor Jen Wizinsky of the BC Liberal Caucus commented that Erin: "Provided thoughtful and thorough analysis - sometimes before I even asked. She knew what to do, how to get it done, and almost always beat a deadline which I can say was greatly appreciated." I believe this comment captures the essence of Erin's vast skill set and hardy determination.

The London School of Economics will be improved by Erin's presence in the fall where she will begin a Masters of Comparative Politics. I am certain, and I know many others are as well, that Erin will continue to impress and positively impact wherever she works, studies, and lives.

FEDERICO CERANI

by Hailey May

Federico was born in Argentina and moved to Coquitlam, B.C., when he was eight. His alma mater is Simon Fraser University, where he graduated with a B.A. Honours in Economics with a minor in Political Science.

He was placed with the Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy in their Climate Action Secretariat (CAS), where he hit the ground running and networked until late every night - as his roommate I often wondered where he was, and as it turns out he was determined to be the last person in the office on most nights. Following his time at CAS it was only natural for him to take his dedication to the Third Party caucus, also known as the B.C. Greens.

As the outspoken, more politically knowledgeable half of the Greenterns, Fede always encouraged me to think more on barriers facing politically underrepresented communities and what we can learn from other jurisdictions. He is the "ideas" man, and he is unwavering in imagining a brighter future. I have learnt a valuable lesson in using your voice from Federico.

"[FEDERICO] IS THE "IDEAS" MAN, AND HE IS UNWAVERING IN IMAGINING A BRIGHTER FUTURE."

Outside of work you can catch Fede playing or watching soccer, enjoying a beverage or two, and biding his time until his next Dungeons and Dragons game. Federico has a bright future ahead of him working in government and eventually pursuing graduate studies. Wherever he goes, he will doubtlessly bring his inquisitive attitude, infectious calm, and quick wit.

I could not have been roommates, colleagues, and quarantine buddies with anyone else; we may have lost our minds, but we lost our minds together. It's only natural to share this page with you Fede!

HAILEY MAY

by Federico Cerani

Hailey was born and raised in Richmond, B.C and graduated with honours from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Science in Conservation, majoring in Global Perspectives.

Coming from a fourth-generation farming family, Hailey has strong interest in agricultural policy and vast knowledge on the subject. Naturally, she was placed in the Ministry of Agriculture where she worked on the ministry's communication on the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). She became quickly integrated with her team and her hard work resulted in a trip to Port Alberni.

From this experience Hailey went on to her next assignment with the Third Party Caucus, or the B.C. Greens. For someone new to the political world, Hailey picked it up quickly and her work and knowledge made her an invaluable member of the caucus. It was in this period that I really got to know Hailey; her laser focus, attention to detail and work ethic make her an amazing worker. Her compassion, empathy and desire to lend a helping hand make her an even better person.

"HER COMPASSION, EMPATHY, AND DESIRE TO LEND A HELPING HAND MAKE HER AN EVEN BETTER PERSON."

When she's not working you can attempt to catch Hailey riding her brand new (recycled) bike around Victoria, climbing rocks, or in the middle of a hike pointing out all the cool plants to her hiking buddy. After this internship Hailey will return to her work directing Youth4Nature, an international youth led non-profit, and when she feels ready she will pursue graduate studies in the field of environmental politics.

I remember meeting Hailey and thinking "she's going places" and after completing this internship, surviving a pandemic, living through quarantine and being Greenterns, I know that to be true.

KATHRYN HAEGEDORN

by Stephen Bagan

"Where you off to?" I'd find myself asking Kathryn (or Kat, as we call her) as she snuck off during an intern potluck or a games night. Whether it was meal prepping for a busy week ahead, hitting the gym before the sun comes up, or writing a last minute column for a Member, Kat has work to do! And her amazing work ethic shows.

As the stand alone health expert of the intern cohort, the COVID-19 pandemic gave Kat a unique opportunity to learn about our public health system from the highest public health officials. She rocked her Ministry placement in Health, met BC's Health Minister, and worked alongside the Health Minister's critic with the communications team in the Opposition caucus.

Not only passionate about improving our health system, Kat has a deep devotion to protecting the planet and recognizes the impact of her individual actions. Don't get caught with a single-use granola bar wrapper around Kat (but if you do, she may have a beeswax wrap to lend you!).

"KATHRYN'S INSIGHTFUL QUESTIONS LED TO GREAT DISCUSSION, [...] THIS DISPLAY OF INQUIRY AND CURIOSITY DEFINES KAT"

During our many panels and webinars with guests, Kat's insightful questions (and there were many) constantly led to great discussion, and this display of inquiry and curiosity defines Kat and the kind of engagement all interns strive for. Whether it's a future as a medical doctor, a health policy analyst, or working her way up the political ladder, Kat has many amazing opportunities in her future, and I am excited to see where she lands.

MALIKI SUPPIN

by Erin Spence

Kelowna's finest landed in the internship program fully equipped with a strong interest in community service and strong opinions on B.C. politics.

Maliki graduated from Okanagan College with a Bachelor in Business Administration this past December. Outside of the internship, he is a proud dog-father of Gus the French Bulldog and strong advocate for the Dixie Chicks and other borderline country musicians.

When we both chose to be in BC Liberal Research, Maliki immediately told Stephen and I how "absolutely stoked" he was for us to all work in the same group. Little did I know at the time that Maliki works harder and more effectively than any person I have ever met. Whether it was chasing down that last little missing data point or fixing my atrocious Excel sheets, he never said that it was too much, never complained, and always was ready to lend a hand. In addition, he has a unique passion for helping his community and truly looks to support and enhance the places he calls home.

"MALIKI WORKS HARDER AND MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN ANY PERSON I HAVE EVER MET"

What I most appreciate about Maliki is his endless ability to surprise. His positive opinions on reality TV, cheesy teenage Netflix dramas, and my own hometown always brought a little bit of joy to our work. Crucially, Maliki was also a very good sport when I relentlessly made fun of him throughout the work day, which I deeply appreciate.

UVic is very lucky to have such an excellent law student gracing their online Zoom chambers this autumn. I imagine that he will have a small law office perched on a beautiful vista somewhere in the province someday. I look forward to bothering him well into the future!

NOELLE SKILLINGS

by Kathryn Haegedorn

Born and raised in Victoria B.C., Noelle Skillings earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Social Justice from the University of Victoria. Noelle is a rarity with a worldview that is grounded in reality. This may be attributed in part to her experience as a world traveller, having travelled all over the world including South America, South East Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Noelle completed her Ministry placement in Jobs, Economic Development, and Competitiveness. I was fortunate to work alongside her in the Liberal Caucus Communications team, and we quickly developed a collegial relationship that was characterized by constantly making fun of each other.

I always found it funny when Noelle skipped over her social justice minor when she'd introduce herself for fear people would make assumptions about her, because I believe that her grasp on many contemporary issues in our society, willingness to learn about new perspectives, ability to rise to any challenge she's presented with, and exceptional critical thinking skills make her well poised to make great changes and to be a real ambassador for social justice.

Noelle lives her life in a way that people should strive for. She does not get caught up in social media, petty gossip, or spending time on electronics (which can be difficult when you're trying to get a hold of her), but lives her life present in every moment with a great deal of balance, spending as much time as she can being active outside, and reading as many books as she possibly can. She is not the type of person to stand idly by and blindly support you in the decisions you make, but will challenge you to be a better person and support you through the process. And in turn, she is not afraid of anything, and is always up for any adventure.

"NOELLE LIVES HER LIFE IN A WAY THAT PEOPLE SHOULD STRIVE FOR."

Victoria will be losing a great member of the community when Noelle moves to return to her job with Western Economic Diversification Canada in Vancouver this summer, but I have no doubt that she will be successful there, and in whatever adventures lie ahead.

PATRICK VACHON

by Emilio Caputo

Patrick Vachon, colloquially known as the Meme Master, is a man of many talents, but none more celebrated than his uncanny ability to churn out a meme exactly 3.27 seconds after something noteworthy (or not) has occurred. Proudly, he hails from the neighbourhood of Fleetwood in Surrey, a city distinct from Vancouver he tells us Northerners – his idea of north being Merritt and up. He also spent a few months living in Whalley, a fact he proudly spouts for some extra street cred to anyone who will listen. In his hometown, Patrick attended Kwantlen Polytechnic University where he earned a degree in History with a focus on military history and a minor in Political Science.

For his ministry placement, Patrick opted for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, where he worked on the ride-hailing file, his greatest accomplishment of the internship. He was rightfully proud – it was innovative policy until a pandemic cleared traffic better than ride-hailing could have. In his caucus placement, Patrick was a valued member of the BC NDP Research and Communications team, curating both memes and policy advice equally on the behest of his supervisor I'm sure. His exceptional knowledge of municipal politics was extraordinarily helpful, as was his frightening ability to pair the faces of MLAs with ridings, portfolios, and even their votes.

"HIS EXCEPTIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF MUNICIPAL POLITICS WAS EXTRAORDINARILY HELPFUL"

Upon reflection, Patrick's fondest memory of the internship is when he was nearly left at a small gas station by his cohorts, possibly extending his trip in Washington state by a few extra days. My favourite memory of Patrick is covering him in snow and leaving him on a flowerpot in James Bay. To add to his accolades, he is the man most often mistaken on paper for the NHL goaltender, Rogie Vachon, and in person mistaken for his decidedly less handsome intern twin, Emilio Caputo.

Despite being the goofiest intern, Patrick also has the largest heart and is someone who will go far with his political aspirations. While I've ostensibly given Patrick the best biography, he has gifted me with a friendship I'll treasure for a lifetime.

PATRICIA MASUR

by Saige Lawson

Patricia Masur grew up in Sahtlam BC, a small town near Duncan, where she acquired a love for good books, the beautiful Cowichan valley and river sandals. After completing high school she moved to Halifax, where she graduated from Dalhousie University with a double Honours in History and Political Science, writing her thesis on the evolution of vigilantism in South Africa.

Upon starting the internship, Patricia was placed in the tourism branch of the Ministry of Arts and Culture. Following this, Patricia completed her caucus placement with the BC NDP, where she promptly added more comfort and style into the Diptern war room. Whilst being distracted by the two Pats playing catch and frequent trips to Discovery Coffee, I hugely valued the chance to work with Patricia and witness her endless curiosity and skill in research and writing.

Outside of work Patricia can be found doing yoga, journalling, tearing through novels that take most people a lot longer to read, or cooking up the best classic roast chicken. She is hard-working and smart as a whip, and is always the one to pose the question that everyone else is wondering but too afraid to ask. Patricia may one day be found working at a midsized university and living in the loft of a heritage house, solving our nation's problems while sipping expensive lattes.

"PATRICIA IS DEDICATED, FUNNY, HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AND STRONG."

Before this however, Patricia will be pursuing a graduate degree in International Policy at the Balsillie School of International Affairs - no doubt before moving to live abroad herself. Patricia is dedicated, funny, highly intelligent and strong. I am excited to see where she ends up.

SAIGE LAWSON

by Patricia Masur

Smithers, BC is a small town in the northern part of the province that I had only ever known as the setting of the not-quite-a-hit 2006 Canadian TV show, "Alice, I Think". As it turns out, Smithers is more famously home to Shotokan Karate blackbelt and baking champion extraordinaire, Saige Lawson!

After moving south, Saige earned an honour's degree in Sociology from the University of Victoria; her thesis offered a comparison of national and local media framing on the Trans Mountain Pipeline. During the internship, Saige worked with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. Following this, Saige was placed alongside myself in the NDP Caucus research team – where I was lucky enough to get to know her better. Particular highlights of Saige's internship include the rabbit holes we've found ourselves in after delving too deep into a discussion as a group, thwarting distraction attempts from both Pat 1 and Pat 2, and our "Dip-tern" coffee dates.

"HER INTELLIGENCE STANDS OUT IN A WAY THAT MAKES SPACE FOR THOSE AROUND HER"

Outside of work you can catch Saige zooming past you on her bike, running long distances, and teaching her fellow interns how to defend themselves. Most importantly, you can also find Saige standing over her prized KitchenAid mixing up treats for her dearest friends and most persistent colleagues. After the internship Saige will seek work in the provincial or federal public service prior to pursuing a graduate degree.

When I first met Saige, I was intimidated by her. Not for any good reason – like a justified fear of fighting her - rather because I was in awe of her. Her intelligence stands out in a way that makes space for those around her, she really listens before she responds, and she cares. I hope to one day see Saige in a decision-making position because we need people like her. We need voices like hers that make space for others.

SAM HARRISON

by Patrick Vachon

There's a scene in the movie Iron Man where Tony Stark is asked when he became an expert on thermonuclear astrophysics, and he replies "last night". I used to think that was outlandish, until I watched Sam Harrison become an expert in the history of B.C's mining policy in a couple days. In an internship filled with bright, well-rounded people, Sam is one of the brightest and most well-rounded.

Sam is originally from a quaint little town in the south-west corner of British Columbia named Vancouver, where, in high-school, he became an engaged member of B.C's environmental movement. His love of the environment followed him to university where he helped lead the University of Toronto's fossil fuel divestment campaign. Sam graduated from U of T with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Energy Systems Engineering featuring both a Minor in Economics and an Honours designation. Upon becoming an intern, Sam took his talents to the Ministry of Finance to work in the Tax Policy branch.

"IN AN INTERNSHIP FILLED WITH BRIGHT, WELL-ROUNDED PEOPLE, SAM IS ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST AND MOST WELL-ROUNDED"

With four Arts majors in the NDP caucus, Sam's unique perspective and skillset was put on full display when on the first day, he taught us how to troubleshoot computer problems by "making sure all of the cords are actually plugged in". The highlight of many days in the basement of the Legislature (or at work from home spaces) was when we would stumble upon a new layer of Sam's knowledge and experience. Whether it was explaining investing, shocking the other interns by having a history with almost every Vancouver based MLA, or wasting an impeccable sense of comedic timing on a pun or "dad joke", Sam was an endless source of both on-task information and off-task entertainment.

When he's not at work, Sam enjoys a variety of outdoor activities including, but certainly not limited to, biking, surfing, swimming, running, camping and rock climbing. As a musician, he takes care of business both on guitar and behind the mic, as caucus found out while hosting a "music night".

Sam's plans for after the internship are not solidified as of the writing of this introduction. He is hoping to continue working in a policy-focused capacity or to apply his engineering knowledge in the private sector. His chances of finding a position in government were definitely helped when Sam reminded the Premier of a certain comment he made about hiring interns as Leader of the Opposition.

STEPHEN BAGAN

by Noelle Skillings

Every intern can agree that we were lucky to have Stephen Bagan as a member of the 2020 cohort. One of the nicest people you will ever meet, Stephen made sure we did not get lost in the halls of the Legislature, using his prior tour guide skills to help us out on more than one occasion.

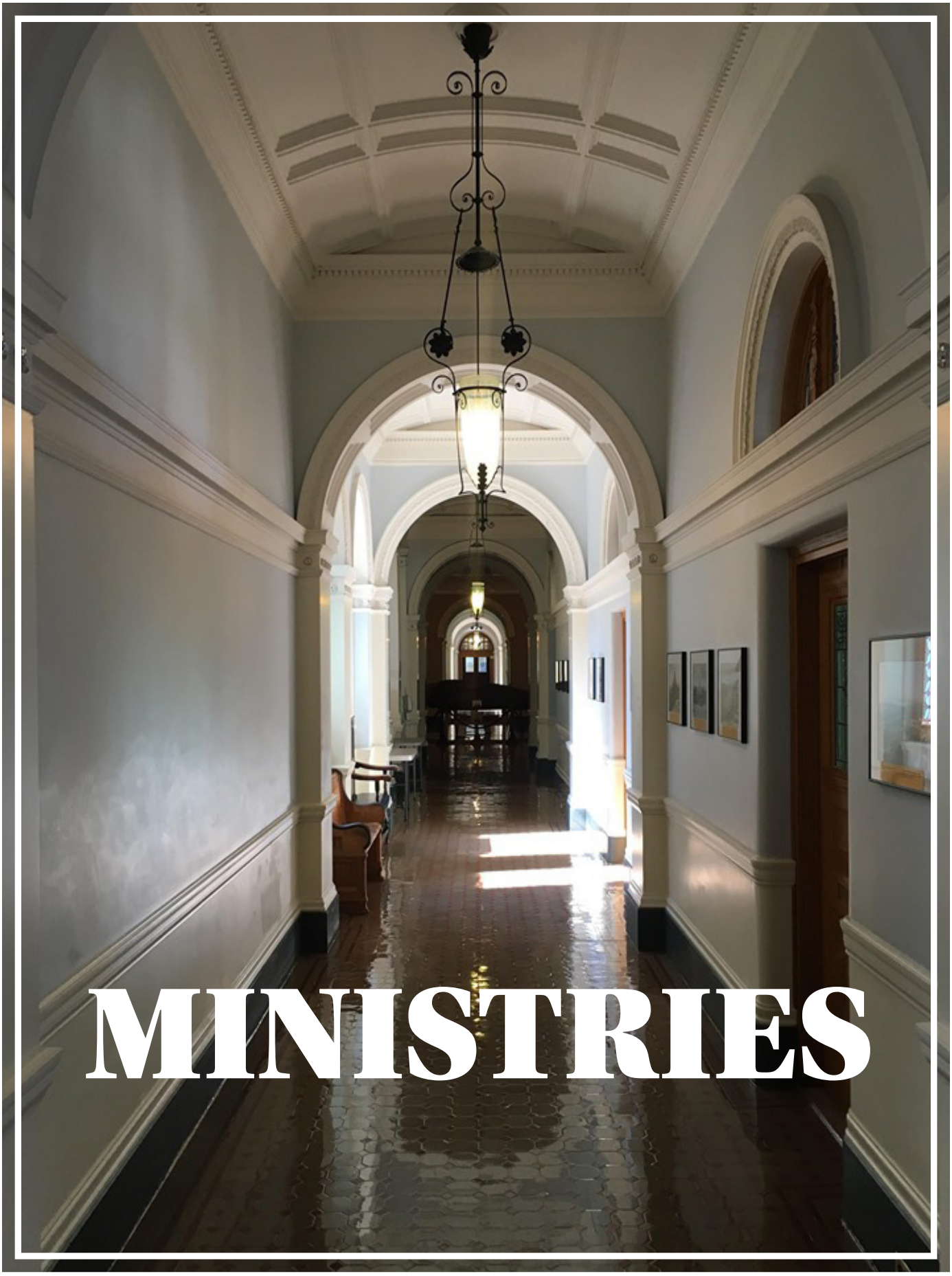
Stephen is proud to be from the beautiful town of Invermere, later leaving to attend the University of Victoria where he received a B.A. in English and Spanish. He was placed with the Ministry of Education (a perfect fit) followed by his placement with the B.C. Liberal Caucus, Research Team.

"THERE WAS NEVER A QUESTION THAT STEPHEN COULD NOT FIND THE ANSWER TO"

I was lucky to work alongside Stephen during our constituency placement with MLA Doug Clovechok's office. Always a pleasure to work with, Stephen knows how to ask the pointed questions (and then research the answer in record time). There was never a question that Stephen could not find the answer to. Proving his work ethic, Stephen was offered a summer work contract with MLA Clovechok's office.

After the summer, Stephen will be attending the University of Victoria's Education Program where he will be pursuing his passion of teaching Spanish and English. There is no doubt Stephen will make a remarkable teacher – I believe Stephen will be one of those teachers we can all look back on and point to as having made an impact in our lives.

The interns ourselves have all learned from Stephen throughout the course of this internship. The education system is lucky to have him.



MINISTRIES

GETTING SCHOOLED (BY THE B.C. CURRICULUM)

by Stephen Bagan

The part of the internship program I was most excited for was the Ministry placement. And, for an aspiring public school teacher, there was no better place to be than the Ministry of Education. While the short four weeks flew by, I was left with relationships, experiences, and lessons that I know will stick with me for years to come.

I requested to be placed in the Curriculum and Classroom Assessment branch, which is part of the Ministry's Education Programs Division, and I was the first intern to join the Ministry in several years. While this meant I had to spend some time explaining who I was and why I was there, everyone's kindness and openness made me feel welcome right away.

As an intern that only has four weeks to experience the ministry and how B.C.'s public service functions, there is a balance that I was aiming to achieve between accomplishing deliverable tasks that serve the organization, getting an educational overview of how the ministry operates, and receiving meaningful mentorship. In my view, an intern needs a bit of luck and an open mind to experience all three of these learning outcomes.

When I sat down with my mentor, Elmas Atabay, and discussed what I'd like to accomplish during four weeks, I mentioned that I'd be keen to work on a project that the branch may have on the backburner, as I knew they were down a team member. This led to an exciting project where I worked closely with curriculum coordinator Alexandra Bomphray analyzing how a language teaching method aligns with B.C.'s new curriculum. It combined my passion for second language learning with a deep dive into the new curriculum.

"I learned about the wide range of possible career paths out there, sometimes straight forward to the top, but often unconventional, curvy paths."

Alex is not only a passionate subject expert on language arts, but is also an amazing teacher and mentor. The idea of the 'intern halo' -- a magic key that allows interns incredible access to senior officials -- really manifested during my Ministry placement, where I was fortunate to meet staff from multiple divisions. I began by contacting a former BCLIP intern who is now an Executive Director in the Ministry, and a simple coffee date turned into further meetings with various senior staff from multiple branches and divisions, and eventually a meeting with the Deputy Minister.

When combined, these meetings and introductions -- sometimes as a fly on the wall in large boardroom meetings or one on one coffee dates -- gave me a remarkable insight into how the Ministry operates as well as what it's like to be a civil servant in B.C. Through the people I met, I learned about the wide range of possible career paths out there, sometimes straight forward to the top, but often unconventional paths. Each story was unique and each one important to the operation of the Ministry. I am tremendously grateful for everyone who included me in their circles, discussions, and lunch hours, ensuring that I experienced just the right balance of engaging assignments, Ministry overview, and amazing mentorship. I hope to be back soon!

I want to thank everyone I met and those I worked closely with, especially to the Curriculum and Classroom Assessment team: Elmas Atabay, Alexandra Bomphray, Reneé Jordan, Nick Poeschek, Lisa Marshall, and Greg Stone.

MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS:
A GOVERNMENTAL START-UP

by Saige Lawson

In the wake of a provincial overdose crisis, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions was created to lead the overdose response and build an improved system of care. The first of its kind in Canada, this new Ministry has some unique characteristics that make for a workplace unlike any other.

The Richard Blanshard building, commonly thought of solely as the Ministry of Health, is also home to the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA). Although MMHA occupies only a portion of the first floor, it encompasses the considerable mandate of creating a seamless and integrated approach to mental health and addictions services in BC. To accomplish this requires extensive collaboration with partnering ministries, governmental agencies, and community stakeholders. During my time at MMHA, I learned a lot about this process, as well as how to ascend 6 flights of stairs without appearing out of breath, and how to politely ask for a meeting with pretty much anybody.

I felt drawn to the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions for several reasons. I was passionate about the subject matter and had relevant work experience that I thought would be useful in the placement. Mostly however, I was curious about this new, up-and-coming ministry and its commitment to improving the system of care through extensive partnerships with different agencies and organizations. The sociologist in me was fascinated at the dynamics of multi-sector collaboration on such a broad scale and wanted to witness what this looked like day-to-day.

"You get to talk to a lot of very smart people and punch a little (or a lot) above your weight."

My placement in the Strategic Policy and Planning branch allowed me to take a front-row seat in the policymaking process. On my first day my mentor informed me that I would be conducting much of the research and analysis associated with a full-policy cycle on the issue of youth substance use. While my first reaction to this news might have been "uhhh.... are you sure?" I dove right in to what proved to be compelling, at times disquieting, and thoroughly important research.

The energy and ardour I witnessed at MMHA was unique to any other government office I had worked in. Things happened fast, and it was all hands on deck, all of the time. At only 3 years old, MMHA is a relatively new ministry with a youthful and energetic culture to match. A colleague once succinctly and accurately described the environment as **akin to a "start-up."** While at times this may manifest in a struggle to find an office chair, more often it meant that everyone naturally pitched in to help each other, doing things differently in a new, non-rigid workplace culture.

As anyone who has worked in small towns or start-ups might know, there are perks to working in a smaller business operation. You get to talk to a lot of very smart people and punch a little (or a lot) above your weight. I also had the opportunity to meet with both my ADM and DM for lengthy and compelling conversations.

The mentorship, informational interviews, fascinating discussions and collegiality are all things I highly valued at MMHA and will remember fondly. I am very grateful to have been a part of this new start-up Ministry, and the lessons I learned there will stay with me for years to come.

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS SECRETARIAT

by Emilio Caputo

The second week of the internship began with our first day in the ministries. I was placed in the Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat (IGRS), a branch of the Premier's office that I knew about from a former intern. After arriving at the correct tall, grey building, I was escorted up to what would be my private office for the next month. While there, I rolled back in my cushioned office chair and was handed a government-issued iPhone. The office even sported a frosted glass wall emblazoned with a printout of my name. As it turns out, I was the only intern to have an office, a phone, and a nameplate.

IGRS is an unusual place in the civil service, which makes me either the most or least qualified to tell you what the interns do in the ministries. What excited me most about IGRS is that it isn't much of a ministry at all, at least in the usual sense of the term, in that it doesn't have a minister per se. IGRS finds its home within the Office of the Premier, meaning IGRS dealt with the rest of the public service in a top-down approach. Like other ministries, policy advice does flow from IGRS, but more importantly, it's where relationships are cultivated between British Columbia and its federal or international partners. Those relationships take the form of three divisions: Intergovernmental Policy, Office of Protocol, and Francophone Affairs Program. In a short four weeks, I ran the gauntlet of all three.

My first week began within Intergovernmental Policy, looking internationally. I had visited China a year earlier on a student exchange coordinated between B.C. and the province of Guangdong, an experience I used as a framework for how subnational governments cooperate. It was also in the first week that I asked my first real question: "What does your day-to-day look like?" It was a poor question. In IGRS, employees find themselves tending to fires more often than not and two days are seldom alike. I was told for my first assignment that, unlike other ministries, "due dates in IGRS are measured in hours and days, not weeks and months." It was certainly true, as I was astounded by the number of tasks I had completed by the end of my placement.

After sitting in on calls with international partners and doing research on contentious transnational issues, I spent a week with the Office of Protocol. These are the folks who do anything from arranging meetings with diplomats to coordinating procedures on half-masting of the flag. I had the opportunity to meet with a consul general, give advice on policy, do comparative research internationally, and attend the ceremony for the Medal of Good Citizenship. It was here that I learned the role of relationship building. British Columbia builds relationships not only with other states but with its own citizens. Recognition is a powerful tool that governments have at their disposal.

The third week was a return to the Intergovernmental Policy team, only this time with a national focus. I endeavoured to unravel the machinations of the beast of a federation. It was William Lyon Mackenzie King who once said, "If some countries have too much history, we have too much geography." While King's notion of history may fall short, geography is certainly a challenge. I was pleasantly surprised with the efficiency of which 10 provinces and 3 territories could debate policy while the "feds" moderated. Only once did I hear an opinion forcefully asserted. Oddly enough, beyond the opinions of some citizens, provinces and territories agree on most things. I can't say that I fully understand how a federation of competing interests stays together, but I'm glad it does.

My final week was spent with the Francophone Affairs Program. It's a team described as small but mighty, running on three full-time staff who coordinate French deliveries for the province. While my French is weak, they graciously afforded me the opportunity work alongside them, investigating Francophone affairs across the country and helping coordinate community programming in French. It's extraordinary work and often unknown in B.C. I came to understand how sharply language defines the lives of British Columbians and how vital the work from the folks at Francophone Affairs is in making minority language groups feel welcome and receive the services they depend on.

Truth be told, all four weeks melded together, as assignments bled over one another and fires came across my desk too. I capped off my time in IGRS with a treat for the office. I gave them a tub of homemade cookies, two framed photos of their favourite intern, and a card that read "To Comfort You In Your Sorrow". I spent my last hours giggling to myself in my office as I heard laughter erupt in the lunchroom as people shared in my gifts. My time in IGRS is an experience I'll always cherish and one I hope to revisit. I left that building on a cold wintry night, carrying with me my bag and a stack of business cards with the names of some of the most incredible people I've met. If there's a lesson to be had here, it's simple. Relationships take time and are developed through kindness and mutual trust – not only through Memorandums of Understanding, which I certainly didn't obsess over writing.

BUDGET LOCKUP

by Sam Harrison

"What's your last name and organization?" is an almost-comical question for a new intern to greet the public service's most senior and important people. Providing staff support at the annual budget lockup was the culmination of my ministry placement with the Tax Policy Branch of B.C.'s Ministry of Finance. My first task was staffing the check-in table reserved for VIPs, awkwardly asking crown executives and deputy ministers to sign confidentiality waivers before they could receive their name badges to enter lockup. Only a few seemed surprised by the process.

My ministry placement was located just across Government Street from the Parliament buildings. Tax policy is a group of about a dozen very busy public servants, responsible for advising the Minister of Finance on all tax-related matters. This results in a high volume of meaningful but demanding policy work for the individuals there – my ministry mentor, with no support staff until I arrived, was responsible for the Carbon Tax, Motor Fuels Tax, and Municipal and Regional District Tax (Hotel Tax). And for this year, he was also responsible for the budget documents. Luckily for me, the branch's role in the budget process presented a unique opportunity to help out on budget day.

Every year, the media and select stakeholders are able to view the budget a few hours in advance of its public release in order to prepare their reactions and statements. Attendees are closed into a room at the convention centre (hence, "lockup") where they spend the morning with a paper copy of the budget.

Typically, about 20 ministry staff take the day off from their regular jobs to help with lockup. This involves checking people in and confiscating phones, coordinating questions from stakeholders and answers from government officials, and generally ensuring attendees have everything they need.

In practice, the lobbyist for a company or a reporter would wave me over, saying, "I have a question about where this number came from." I would then frantically flip through my booklet of public servants' faces and subject matter areas to find the relevant person, radio the other volunteers to ask "Hey, does anyone know where John Smith is?", then walk through the room, trying to match the printed headshot to the actual person, and finally return them to the question-asker.

Once the Finance Minister deposits the budget on the Clerk's table in the House, the embargo of lockup ends. Cell phones are returned to their owners, the convention centre turns on the WiFi, and press releases, statements, and articles are sent off. For me, budget day was also the first day of our caucus placements, so when all the excitement and noise of lockup was done – I walked over to the Legislature to start my new job.

"When all the excitement and noise of lockup was done - I walked over to the Legislature to start my new job."

THANK YOU MINISTRY MENTORS

SAM: MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Brian Murata, Steve Hawkshaw, Richard Purnell, Braden O'Neil

ERIN: MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

Andrea Buzbuzian, Alayna Van Leeuwen, Alexander Sterling + everyone from PLD!

HAILEY: MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Anna North, Heather Anderson, Elissa Whittington, Kevin Sage, Gray Daniels

STEPHEN: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Elmas Atabay, Alexandra Bomphray, Renee Jordan, Lisa Marshall, Nick Poeschek, Greg Stone

KATHRYN: MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Tim Woolfrey, Greg Seib, Alexis Tanner, David Crow

PATRICK: MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

Lynne Tang, Jodi Dong, Jess Nielsen, Sonja Zoeller, Kate Mukasa, Vanessa Day

PATRICIA: MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE

Suzanne Ferguson, Darb Erickson, Andrew Little, Valerie Darkke

FEDERICO: MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Archie Riddell, Tina Neale and the Climate Risk Management Team

SAIGE: MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Lori MacKenzie, Miranda Andrews, Joanne MacMillan, Nick Grant

MALIKI: MINISTRY OF ENERGY, MINES AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES

Amy Sopinka & Scott Cutler

EMILIO: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS SECRETARIAT

Craig Windrim, Bobbie Plecas, Nicole Longpre, Sylvia Blake, Chantal Brodeur, and Karen Felker as my closest supervisors and everyone at IGRS!

NOELLE: MINISTRY OF JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS

Kursti Calder

A VISIT TO

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

by Erin Spence

In early February, we were lucky to be hosted by the Washington State Legislature and their team of enthusiastic interns and staff. After an early morning start from the parliamentary precinct, we set out across the border in search of coffee, fun snacks, and, most importantly, insights into American politics.

Our Sunday introduction to Olympia came in the form of an elabourate scavenger hunt. Split into two groups, the BCLIP interns raced to pass a bill through the bicameral Legislature. Our group tried to pass the controversial yet absolutely essential bill that decreed the surface area, weight, and origins of pineapple that would be allowed on American pizzas. There is something particularly enjoyable about running through those great, marble halls while on an exceedingly silly mission.

Our hosts generously answered all of our questions about the intricacies of the state system. Mail-in ballots and elections were a popular subject; the sheer amount of choice and decision-making power placed upon voters allowed citizens as much or as little input into their various public officials as they wish. Everything from judges to municipal officials can appear on the mail-in ballot. For us, it was a unique chance to ask all of the uncertain questions that we had always pondered about governance across the border.

On Monday, the Lieutenant Governor and an Advisor on Climate and Energy to the Governor gave us a unique look into both the policy-making process in Washington and the unique interests at play in the area. Laura Anglin, Law Clerk to Justice Steven Gonzales, and Robert Mead, a Supreme Court Law Librarian, gave us the insider's guide to the evolution of American law and the core principles that guide their work.

Spending time with the Washington interns was a highlight. All of the interns were still enrolled in university, and many commuted hours just to come to the State Legislature to work. Their work ethic and dedication to state politics was inspiring, and they gave us some of the most nuanced insight into Washington state politics and political culture.

The trip was such a whirlwind. Yet, as we rushed back to the ferry on Monday night, it felt like we knew so much more about our southern neighbours. We were exhausted but deeply content as we sailed back to Victoria, ready to start our caucus placements on the following Friday.

Thank you to our wonderful American hosts for giving us such a warm welcome. We appreciated the excellent coffee, the energetic conversations, and, most of all, the chance to spend time together.

CROSSING THE LINE: WET'SUWET'EN PROTESTS, ALLYSHIP, AND OUR FIRST DAY BACK

by Hailey May

After Ministry placements and our trip to Washington State, we were all eager to return to work at the Legislature. Little did we know that our first day back would coincide with both the Speech from the Throne and one of the largest protests on the lawn of the Legislature in recent memory.

The ongoing conflict around Wet'suwet'en rights and title and the Coastal GasLink pipeline is something that none of us have taken lightly. Our diversity of opinions on the matter cannot be summarized by myself alone, nor do we expect them to encapsulate the complexity of Indigenous rights and title in British Columbia and Canada. As students of governance, we all believe in the right to protest and its role in shaping democratic governments. This piece is intended not to give an opinion on either of the aforementioned, but to share one view of the experience we had as interns of the Legislative Assembly who got caught in a unique setting on our first day back to parliament.

On this not-so-typical Tuesday, we were meant to be entering the Legislative Chamber to view the proceedings of the House for the first time. The first official day of the spring session was marked as usual by the Speech from the Throne, and we arrived on the grounds in the early afternoon intending to enter the building together through an entrance that had been deemed as clear. We had been warned of the planned rally, and many of us spent the morning scrolling through Twitter watching MLAs being blocked from entering the Legislature. We had assumed, perhaps naively, that we wouldn't be as conspicuous when it came to our turn.

Upon meeting and walking onto the lawn, we were confronted with the reality of the situation we were in as hundreds of protestors with linked arms stood across every identifiable entrance to the Legislative Assembly. From the time we were told it was safe to come inside to the time we got to the entrance, it seemed that the protesters had moved positions. The idea of crossing the line of people - some of whom other interns knew, and many of whom reflected my own friends back home - made me immediately nauseous. It is an affronting experience to be met by a human wall, and it is one that none of us were prepared for.

Gathered together, we approached the entrance we had been told to use with an escort from the Victoria Police. As we got closer the voices of the crowd drowned out our ability to talk to each other. I was approached by someone holding a microphone, who I assumed was a journalist; they asked who we were, and I responded with a shake of my head trying to communicate that I did not want to talk. We drew closer still, and the crowd got louder. There was a moment's pause as we assessed what was happening, and then we were separated into two groups: those who made it inside the building, and those who did not.

Those at the front of the group made it inside and were forced to cross the blockade. They pulled - and were pulled - through the crowd with people shouting in their ears, elbows flying and cameras capturing it for Twitter. Those of us who didn't make it inside were separated from the others by several people stepping in front of us and shouting "Stand with us!", "Leave, now" and "You're on the wrong side". We paused briefly, trying to assess what to do, and then a large camera was pointed at my face from behind the protestors. I immediately turned around, and we walked away to try - and fail - at another entrance.

A group of legislative interns are now being allowed through by the Victoria Police. The crowd shouts, "stand with us!"

@thatemfagan. February 11, 2020. Twitter.

Immediately following, those who made it inside went into the Chamber and watched the Speech in person. While appreciating the symbolic nature of the events, they surely hadn't anticipated being in that state of mind, coupled with the knowledge that they'd have to cross the line again to leave. Those of us on the outside bounced from place to place while trying to not draw attention to ourselves albeit hindered by our business attire. With parliament, the bunker, and the Menzies building blocked, we snuck into the exercise room and watched the opening of parliament from a laptop in a room with free weights and yoga balls.

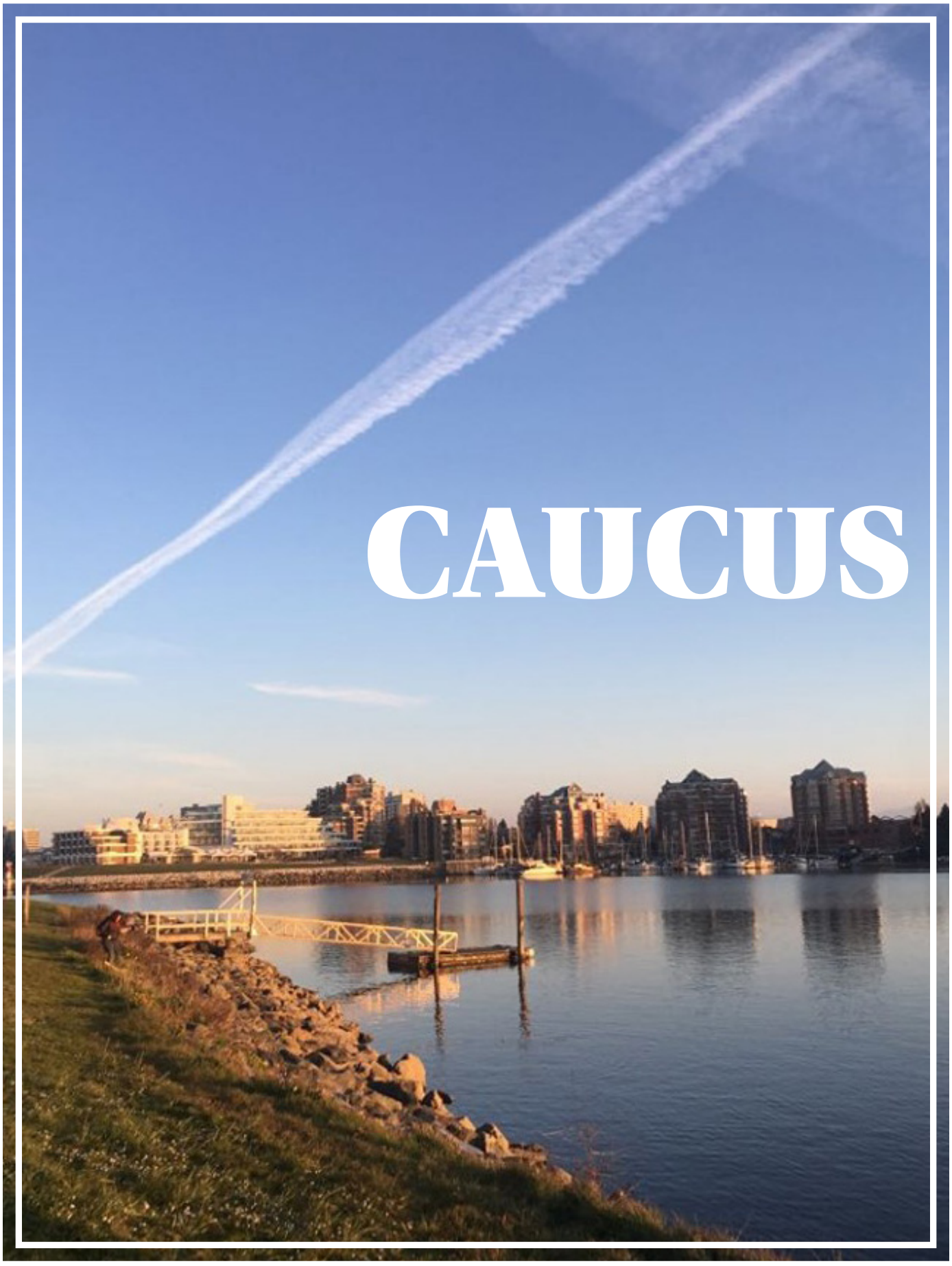
The confrontation itself lasted less than ten minutes, but it felt much longer. It is difficult to recount trauma and it in fact feels privileged to call it that. To be called anything else, however, feels like an underestimation of the impact it had on us. It is a thin line to walk between conveying the emotion of the moment and potentially dramatizing what happened, but it is one that's worth toeing.

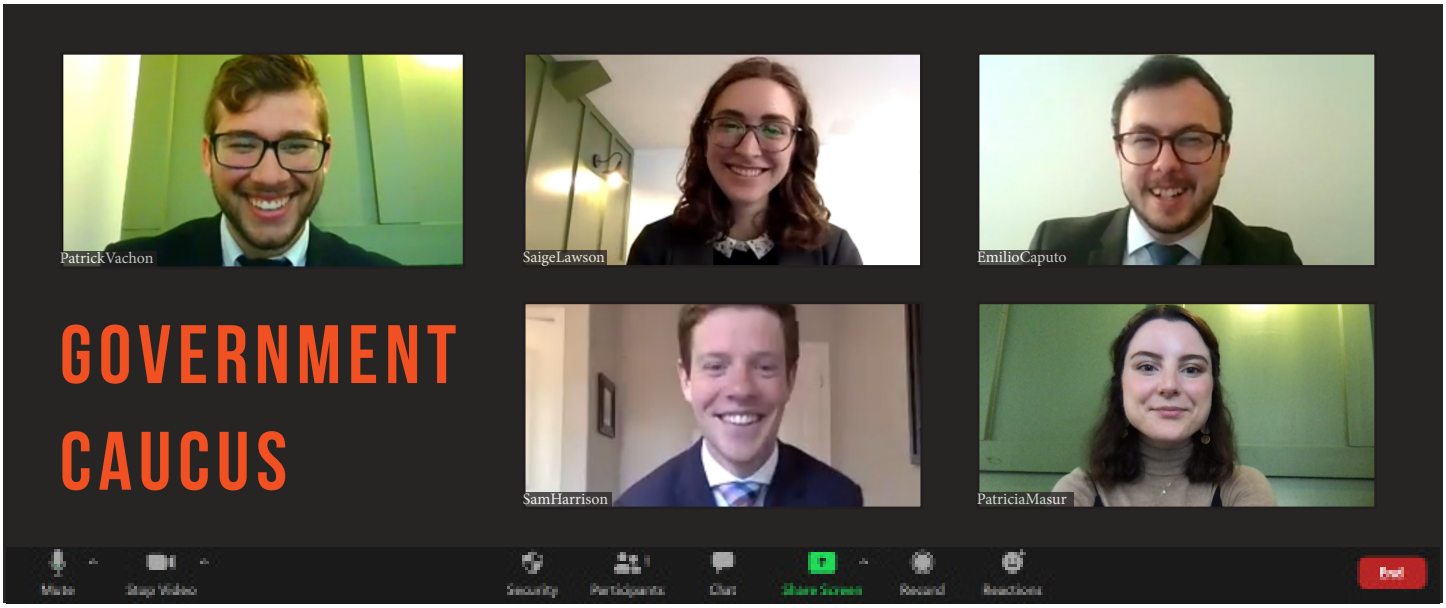
Our unique first day back to the Legislature did not go unnoticed, and while we wish it wasn't the reason we drew attention, we're appreciative of the guidance of legislative staff, elected members, and even the Premier, who all shared their similar experiences of the day and processed their reactions alongside us. While protests on the front steps are common, many agreed that this one felt larger, perhaps more confronting than others.

It would be dishonest to say that my initial reaction to our experience was not mixed between anger, immense guilt, and confusion. I struggled with anger at being identified as an enemy of the movement, and guilt from not knowing where I could use my voice as an employee of the Legislative Assembly. The confusion came later, when I began to reflect on the actors in the situation. Indigenous allyship is a deeply personal value of mine, and one that got put into question that day. In a complex system of governance, where did I fit? Had I made the wrong choice; what if I really was on the wrong side of the line?

It was an affronting public situation to start our spring session with, and it marked our time as interns in ways that we are still processing. This was the first time that I felt truly "othered" and targeted by a group of people. Writing this months later I'm certain that that feeling will stick with me for a long time, however the value of the lesson in empathy learned will remain for far longer.

Coming from an activist background, I have met enough people with a distrust for government to recognize that same anger in the faces on the front steps that day. While respecting their drivers, I choose to believe differently; an empathic government is a powerful driver of change, and one that is worth working towards from within. I did not know the answer to my questions that day, and this internship hasn't resolved them. What I can now say for certain, however, is that allies exist on both sides of the line.


CAUCUS



When we began the internship, one phrase was continually repeated to us: "you may not remember the work you do, but you will remember the people". While we haven't forgotten the work just yet (here's looking at your spreadsheets, Brady), there are a few we certainly won't ever forget. First, Ed May and Joanna Groves. They took in five interns who they didn't know beforehand and immediately became mentors and supporters of ours. We were each assigned to a Research and Communications Officer, and our experiences certainly would not have been the same without them: Sam would like to thank Chelsea, Saige would like to thank Tori, Emilio would like to thank Ella, Patricia would like to thank Maddy (and Joanna, again, for helping out before Maddy started), and Patrick would like to thank Krystal.

Within a week of joining caucus, the government interns had given ourselves a nickname: the "Dipterns", a play on a nickname for NDP members. Being a Diptern was an interesting experience that meant many things for each of us. On one day it meant impromptu meetings with Ministers and MLAs, who would wander into our basement office to vent about what had happened in QP. The next it meant finding new ways to distract each other between projects, whether it was initiating trips to Discovery Coffee, throwing a foam ball at the other interns, Sam's new-found expertise in mining policy or Patrick's latest meme.

Once we moved to working from home, we stopped throwing a ball to each other, but life continued to throw us curveballs. No longer were we together in one room everyday for eight hours, but that meant new experiences and new projects. Mostly we worked on overdue research and helping constituency offices correspond with their constituents, but occasionally we were asked to write and research MLA blogs, op-eds, or a speech. Some of us were able to substitute a physical visit to a constituency with a virtual one, working remotely with a single office doing research or posting on social media. While caucus was no longer as we had expected, the endless thanks and gratitude for our work made it a rewarding experience in its own right.

The meetings also became a new experience while working from home. While in the basement these visits would often spur of the moment, casual, and conversational. As other years have done, we kept a running tally of which MLAs visited and how many times, which became a competition among caucus colleagues. At the time we began working from home, MLA Bowinn Ma was the clear winner, beating MLA Bob D'Eith, Minister Selina Robinson (even with her extra points for walking the furthest to come see us), and Premier John Horgan (though his visits during the pandemic, while we weren't there, did bring him closer). Once we began working from home, all five of us had a sinking fear that that part of our experience would be over. However, Joanna continued to work very hard for us and began setting up zoom meetings with people we had had an interest in meeting.

These meetings were not like the ones we were having in the basement as they had a formality to them that wasn't there before. However, they shone a light onto the lives and careers of so many intelligent, talented, successful people and in some way put a name to the idea of where we wanted to go and who we wanted to be. More than once, one of us would leave a meeting and say "I know what I want to do after the internship/for the next five years/with my career".

Being with the government caucus was an experience that certainly shaped our interactions with, and views of, B.C.'s political environment. The work challenged us to develop new skills and put them to the test to help others. The 9 a.m. meetings and caucus calls showed us the massive efforts put in to supporting our lawmakers. And the connections and conversations showed such unique insights into political life that none of us can say we're exactly the same as we were when we started.

Sincerely,
Emilio, Patrick, Patricia, Saige, and Sam

Working for the BC Liberal Caucus was an incredible chance to learn, pursue new and challenging kinds of work, and collaborate with a passionate team of outspoken people. Often, the environment in Opposition was electric. Watching the proceedings on TVs in our offices felt like a live newsroom with constant events unfolding. Every new announcement was a surprise and a new opportunity to dig deeper into issues. In a single day, you could be pulled into a bill briefing, a press conference, write a speech for an MLA, summarize statistics about education investments, or draft questions for committee stage and estimates debates.

In addition to the daily work, there are two experiences we would like to highlight. One was watching a live press release and having a debrief with the Opposition House Leader, Mary Polak, to discuss the importance of body language, volume, and the level at which you speak. The second was when Leader Andrew Wilkinson joined our weekly caucus meeting. He was able to accurately describe the challenges we faced as interns in a pandemic by saying you can maintain relationships, but it is difficult to build new ones. Luckily for us, caucus staff took this to heart and went out of their way to build relationships with us.

Despite losing some of the opportunities we would have had in the buildings, we found new ways to contribute and stay connected. One way we did this was by volunteering ourselves to help constituency assistants and their MLAs directly. We were in constant contact with both MLAs and their staff and were able to write letters to ministers, constituents, and local newspaper columns and also posted on social media.

The research interns are grateful to Derek, Parveen, Ryan, Karen, John, Dion, Jennifer, and David for taking us under their wing. The research team is not only some of the most hard working individuals we have met, but also some of the kindest and oftentimes funniest colleagues we have had the pleasure of working with.

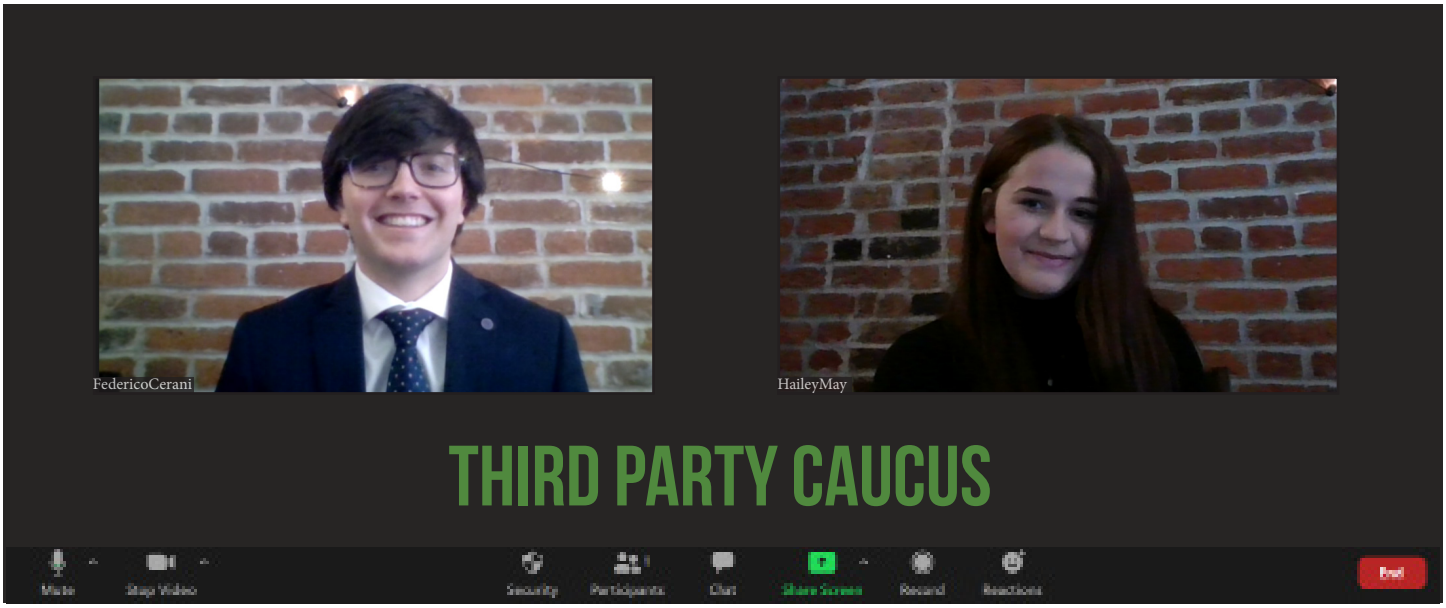
Additionally, the communications interns want to extend their gratitude to the communications team and thank Doug Secord for going above and beyond. Doug gave the communication interns meaningful work and connected the whole intern cohort with people working in all factions of public service. Thank you Doug for the opportunities you have given us. We would also like to thank Andrew Reeve for making us feel like we were part of the team and teaching us the ropes.

In addition, all five interns would like to extend our personal gratitude to the MLAs that we were able to work with during our caucus placements. MLAs Shirley Bond, Jane Thornthwaite, Joan Isaacs, Michelle Stilwell, Mary Polak, Todd Stone, Peter Milobar, Norm Letnick, Coralee Oakes, and Doug Clovechok.

We also want to express our appreciation for constituency assistants: Tamie Nohr, Rachel Loganberg, Gabrielle Ksinan De Groot, Dorothy Titchener, and Jackie Sarginson. Each of them provided us with much appreciated guidance while we were completing our caucus placements.

Overall, the BC Liberal Caucus staff and MLAs made us feel valued as interns and provided us with a depth of experience that was beyond our expectations. We felt included and a part of the larger team which allowed us to make connections that will last well beyond this internship. Thank you to all members of the BC Liberal Caucus.

Sincerely,
Erin, Kathryn, Maliki,
Noelle, and Stephen



For the two of us who became Greenterns (Green Interns, thanks 2019 cohort for the term!), being given the fortune to join the six-person staff team in the basement of the Legislature felt like being handed the opportunity of a lifetime.

The first thing we noticed upon entering the office was the hyper-energetic atmosphere and the camaraderie between the staff and the MLAs. It felt like stepping into the arena on the underdog team, with a fraction of the resources and the same amount of work as the larger caucuses. This gave us the opportunity to immediately roll up our sleeves and dive deep into research and communications spanning question period, estimates, members statements, building briefing notes on upcoming bills (Hailey's favourite task), escorting the MLAs to the Chamber and being in the hallway for any potential scrums, and meeting with stakeholders and government agents.

We were not treated as stereotypical "interns" in the Green caucus, characterized on our first day by our Chief of Staff asking us to come up with something else to identify ourselves as. We didn't mind the term, but we did appreciate the equal footing they stood us on immediately upon starting work. Our voices were valued as equally as permanent and experienced staff, and while daunting, the respect that we were given challenged us to work more critically, effectively, and responsibly. This turned into a cycle of us doing our best to prove our capabilities and critical analysis, and caucus staff valuing this work and expanding our portfolios. As young professionals this level of trust humbled us both and has made us more diligent and driven in our careers.

Working for the Third Party was an invaluable experience that gave us the best of both worlds: as an informal coalition partner, we were privy to government briefings and the behind the scenes work of holding the balance of power, however as members of the Opposition, we were able to experience how government is held accountable, and where to push for reform and the future we need.

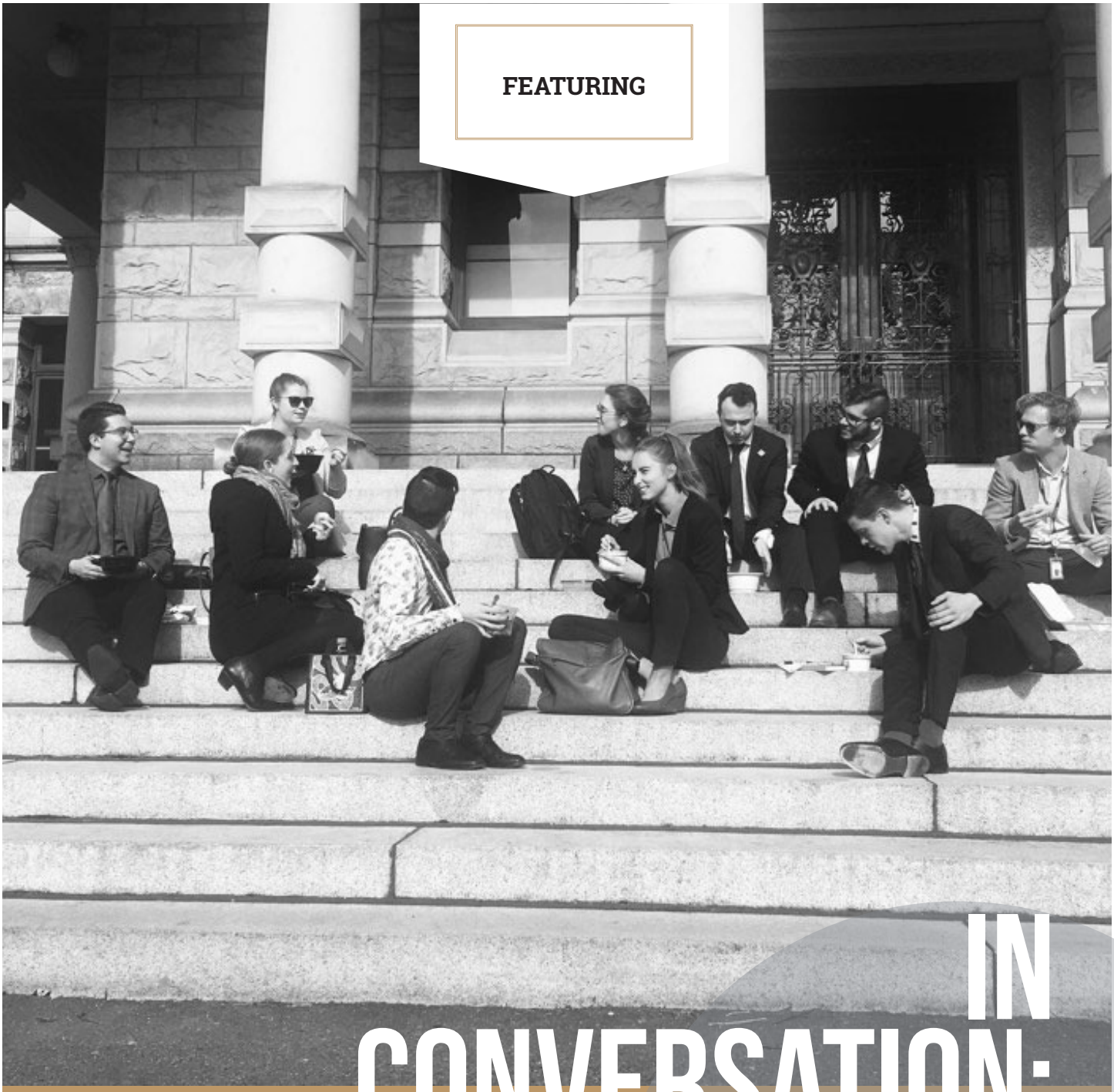
We stumbled upon a fascinating time in history to be interns. Holding the balance of power during times of unrest gave us first-hand insight into the decision-making process that goes into maintaining the Confidence and Supply Agreement and trust between parties and the public. The opportunity to work for the Third Party was historic enough, however the events of early 2020 were unprecedented and shaped our caucus experience in ways we could not have anticipated.

Striving for change in an institution rooted in historical legacies is no simple task, and we cannot overstate how hardworking, thoughtful, and determined the MLAs, caucus, and party staff are. It was a privilege to be on their team.

To future Greenterns: work hard, be curious, dare to question others and yourself, and remember that the road in front of us is built by the work being done today. To Evan, Adam, Sonia, Claire, Sarah, Jojo, Kaylea, and Judy: keep going.

Sincerely,
Federico and Hailey

FEATURING



IN CONVERSATION:

A THREE PART SERIES

While we preferred to have our conversations over lunch on the backsteps of the Legislature, the following series is the result of more formal interviews between interns and Members and their staff. Expect talks on constituency work, what drew them to politics, and lessons learned.

IN CONVERSATION WITH: MLA ADAM OLSEN AND MLA SONIA FURSTENAU

by Hailey May

WHY DID YOU WANT TO GET INTO POLITICS?

SF: Because of what happened in my community. There was a permit granted for a contaminated soil dump located near the head of the watershed for my riding. Legislation was enacted that allowed for it, and I wanted to change it.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

AO: No two days are the same; I've worked in an office environment and I've worked in physical labour and for me that repetition was a challenge. Being an elected official, there is a huge amount of variety in the issues that we have to address. I have to always be on my toes and open to learn in areas that I never expected to have to have expertise. The variety is fascinating, challenging, and an aspect that I embrace.

YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

SF: I find social media very challenging as a woman in politics. And parades are not my favourite thing.

AO: Unnecessary political drama. And then the partisanship. There is very little room in my mind for anything but governance-related issues, when it becomes about the personality or personal pursuits is when I get frustrated. It doesn't mean that we don't disagree or criticize in a gentle, kind, and compassionate way, but it has to be because we're looking to advance good public policy rather than individual pursuits.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT AS AN MLA?

SF: I am very proud of the *Professional Governance Act*, which is a very big first step in addressing the problems with professional reliance. That was what I had set as my goal to accomplish and I'm proud that that Act exists.

AO: Confidence in a stable minority government. We're a year away from the next election and that is something that people didn't think they were going to see. It has never been easy from my seat, but I didn't get elected for it to be easy.

WHAT WAS THE FUNNIEST OR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT YOU'VE HAD AS AN MLA?

SF: In July 2017 our family took a trip to Northwest B.C., catching the ferry in Port Hardy early one July morning after camping in our tent trailer in the ferry lineup the night before. After boarding, we headed up to line up for much needed coffee – I was wearing a baseball cap to cover my disheveled hair. The last thing I expected was to be recognized, being so far from home, but much to my surprise the person next to me in line said, "Are you Sonia Furstenau?". It was a moment when I realized that my days of anonymity were behind me.

AO: It was on Election Night actually, does that count? The CHEKTV reporter had his camera in my face and we were looking at the TV screen. [T]he reporter asked "What do you make of the numbers [of elected Members per party] coming out?". And I said "Well, from my perspective, that looks like the people of British Columbia are going to get value for dollars from their government this time around". It became immediately apparent to me that we were going to be working very hard, and for the most part every single one of us [MLAs] have had to be in attendance every single day and paying attention to what is going on, and I think that's very important.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST LESSON THAT YOU'VE LEARNED IN YOUR CAREER?

SF: Persistence really matters. Trying to accomplish change of any magnitude takes an enormous amount of persistence. Don't give up when it feels like you can't make any progress, just keep pushing for the change you want to see. Don't relent, if it's what you truly believe in, then keep working for it.

AO: Finding ways to manage the brain work, but also the physical, spiritual, and emotional aspects of being a human. What's important to point out about this job is that you sign up to be a catch basin for everything negative in your community, and that is a really heavy mental drain. The thing that I've learned over the last year is that paying special attention to my own personal health and wellbeing makes me do a much better job at managing stress.

Sonia Furstenau, MLA for Cowichan Valley

Adam Olsen, Interim Leader for the B.C. Greens, MLA for Saanich North and the Islands

"Finding ways to manage the brain work, but also the physical, spiritual, and emotional aspects of being a human."

IN CONVERSATION WITH: HON. MELANIE MARK

by Patricia Masur

Minister Melanie Mark has many firsts to her name. She is the first female First Nations MLA and cabinet minister. Her career in politics began in 2016 but the whole of her lived experiences has informed the work she does. So how does this first First Nations female cabinet minister navigate a system that was never meant to include her? Put simply: to navigate politics as an outsider is to attempt to change the political landscape.

When asked what motivates her, Minister Mark took a reflective pause before answering with certainty, "my experiences... they are not just my own, and they cannot be repeated."

As a former youth in care, Minister Mark had first-hand encounters with the most intimate failures of our social system – failures that certainly did not begin with her. Mark explains that the lives of her peers, family, and those around her were shaped by significant "injustices and unfairness." At its simplest, Minister Mark is motivated by the pursuit of justice, rather than "just a pay-cheque".

The Honourable Melanie Mark, Minister for Advanced Education, Skills and Training, MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant

In her own words, Minister Mark entered politics to "disrupt the status quo." After spending nearly a decade working with the Representative for Children and Youth, Minister Mark realised the same system that had failed her was continuing to leave countless youths behind. Entering politics enabled Minister Mark to shape the systemic motivation of government, explaining that, "the system, not the people, need to change." Expanding on the role of her early professional and personal experiences, Minister Mark spoke in detail on the importance of incorporating an empathetic approach to her work. "Without empathy," Minister Mark described, "there's no understanding. Understanding is what drives meaningful action."

When asked about limitations she faces in politics, Minister Mark was quick to note that there are simply not enough hours in the day. Straying from the individual lens intended by my question, Minister Mark inadvertently answered the much larger question of how one navigates the catch-22 many women find themselves in: the infamous label of being "too emotional." Speaking with her heart on her sleeve, Mark expressed concerns that we run the risk of becoming too numb in our political sphere. Rather, she argued, that there is a significant need for empathy and emotion in politics; however, these qualities are considered inherently feminine, and consequently ignored in the male-dominated political sphere. Regardless, they are essential: "We need emotion in politics," Mark states, "Emotion is conviction. It's passion."

> **"We need emotion in politics. Emotion is conviction. It's passion."**

IN CONVERSATION WITH: MLA DOUG CLOVECHOK AND RACHEL LOGANBERG

by Noelle Skillings

Rachel Loganberg, Constituency Assistant for Doug Clovechok

Doug Clovechok, MLA for Columbia-River Revelstoke

WHY DID YOU WANT TO GET INTO POLITICS/CONSTITUENCY WORK?

DC: I started out as a teacher, then got into tourism - all my careers have been centred around people. I was interested in the political process and active in leadership campaigns, running in Calgary for an Alderman's position. I've always had an interest and when I moved out to the valley and watched the MLA out here - virtually doing nothing and the community's needs not being fulfilled - I decided to run. It all comes back to the fact that I like helping people.

RL: I worked at the same post-secondary institution as Doug. Shortly after the election, Doug asked me to work as the CA in his riding. I knew nothing of a CAs role; I ended up interviewing another CA for over an hour before accepting the job – and I'm so glad I did. I knew Doug was going to be a great MLA - his heart is in the right place, and I am honoured to support him and the residents of Columbia River-Revelstoke.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

DC: Engaging with constituents and helping people solve the real problems. I find enjoyment in getting to know and working with the constituents and communities, really broadening your horizons and finding solutions to people's issues. Also, seeing how happy people are is very gratifying and I am grateful for that work.

RL: Being able to help people; it's such a fantastic feeling being able to take weight off someone's shoulders. Whether it's getting the answer to someone's burning question, locating funding for a non-profit society, or connecting individuals and organizations together, it's busy but fulfilling work.

YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

DC: Being in opposition. I've accomplished a lot as an opposition member and MLA but one of the most frustrating parts is seeing solutions and not being able to implement them. I am a solution-driven individual and knowing there is one and I can't do anything about it is difficult. But we're going to do something about that by winning the next election!

RL: Some files have a long history within a particular ministry that I end up spinning my wheels. It's difficult coming to terms with bureaucracy; our riding is very large, we have a lot of Ministries to deal with. Transborder healthcare issues, disappearing public transportation, social development programs, childcare struggles, water security, backcountry access, wildlife concerns, and highway safety are our 'stay on the desk' files. Not being able to achieve the results our offices set out to obtain is difficult, but as a general rule, CAs like to give a second effort, and we always try to find a silver lining for the constituent.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT IN YOUR ROLE/PROUDEST MOMENT?

DC: I look at my accomplishments and see a lot of gratification from them. I remember when I was campaigning before the 2017 election and asked what I will do - I replied I would "work my tail off and won't lie to you" - and that's exactly what I've done.

RL: As the CA, I feel my role is to support the constituents and the MLA. I am motivated internally, therefore if a constituent is happy, or the MLA is recognized for something they have worked hard on, then I'm proud.

WHAT WAS THE FUNNIEST/MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT?

DC: When I first went to Victoria, I was completely lost in that building. Of course, when session is ongoing you can't leave. I knew where the front door was to get back to my office so I went outside, passing the Premier's office where Jackie Tegart, Eric Foster, and the Premier spotted me and said to the RCMP, "We got a runner!" The caucus was reminded later we can't go outside and leave the grounds. I raised my hand and said to the Premier "I won't do it again - I got my ankle bracelet on now!"

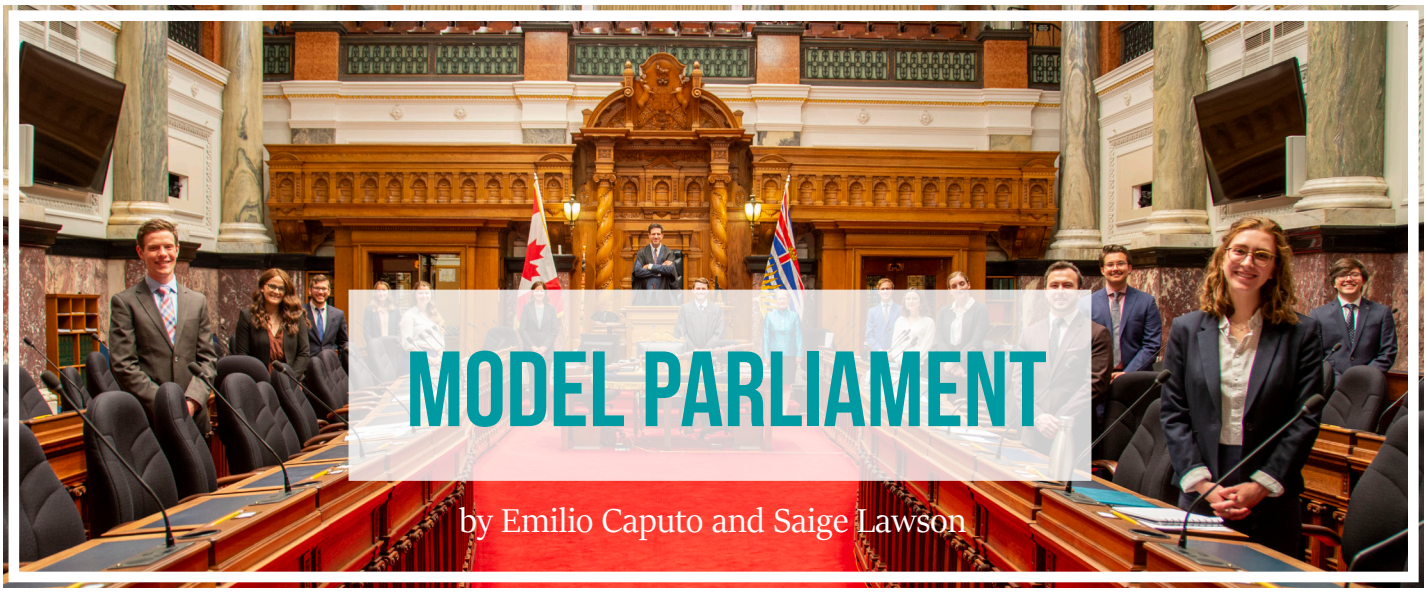
RL: There are lots of funny moments; Doug has other staff in Victoria and in the riding – it's cliché, but we all love to have a good laugh, mostly at ourselves. We need to keep a good sense of humour, as this role is very intense and busy.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST LESSON THAT YOU'VE LEARNED IN YOUR CAREER?

DC: Never ever, ever doubt yourself, ever. Always stick to the values you believe in - don't let others sway you. Without that you have nothing. Listen, be open, don't be stubborn, but if you don't believe in it don't give into it.

RL: That MLAs and Ministers work non-stop; I was shocked at the number of inquiries Doug receives at his home, every single day of the year. Elected officials do very important work, but they are people with families and friends. These individuals give up a significant amount of their own free time and space to help and support others. I wish more people knew this; I know I didn't fully appreciate to what depth elected officials give.

"I am a solution-driven individual, and knowing there is one and I can't do anything about it is difficult."



MODEL PARLIAMENT

by Emilio Caputo and Saige Lawson

Needless to say, conducting an in-person model parliament in the middle of a global pandemic was a unique experience for the 2020 interns. It was the first time all twelve of us had gathered together in one space since we transitioned to work-from-home 11 weeks prior. Apart from the trepidation of finally seeing each other's quarantine haircuts in person, we all felt a bit unsure about simulating the workings of parliament, having never before seen a full session in person.

But in true 2020 intern style, we took all curveballs in our stride. Upon reaching the legislature the morning of, many of us broke off into our assigned parties to go over speaking notes and materials for Question Period, while others took the last hour to enjoy a take-out Parliamentary Dining Room lunch. Regardless of our varying levels of preparation, 1 pm soon arrived and we filed into the Chamber.

It was, as Patrick reflected in an afterthought, a bit like stepping into a gladiatorial arena. We took our seats and all rose as Dr. Baier, our honorary speaker of the day, welcomed us to the chamber. He was followed by Karen, the Lieutenant Governor, entering in formal procession and reading the throne speech. The stage was set and the fun began.

All party selection was completely random, except for the one caveat of Hailey and Federico. Fate pulled their names from the same hat (again), and we had to forcibly separate them into different parties to avoid having them be roommates, coworkers, and fake caucus partners.

Question Period with the 2020 interns proved to be a decidedly spicy event of which there are two notable examples. The Government Whip and Opposition House Leader faced some serious questioning on their elicit cross-partisan love affair. They were asked to respond to a video that was circulated days before the event, that depicted the two members engaging in unparliamentary behaviour while under disguise in Beacon Hill Park. The Member for Salmon Leg was overheard saying to The Member for Laketown-Wharfside, "I cannot wait to hear about all those secret bills and stuff," to which the Member replied that she could not wait to talk about all the secrets of the throne speech.

The Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources, Agriculture, Rural Development and Long Ministry Names was later asked to speak to the lack of accessibility of her treehouse office. The Minister had recently come under fire for neglecting residents in her constituency of Menziesii-Plicata in favour of her extensive ministry portfolio, and was doubly hard to reach for anyone with mobility issues. The Leader of the Official Opposition wasted no time in throwing some shade on this issue.

House Party (Government)

- Noelle Skillings: Minister of Provincial Defence & Espionage, Member for Laketown-Wharfside
- Kathryn Haegedorn: Premier, Minister Responsible for Magic, Member for Hogwarts-Hogsmeade
- Patrick Vachon: Government House Leader, Member for Greendale-City College
- Hailey May: Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources, Agriculture, Rural Development & Long Ministry Names, Member for Menziesii-Plicata
- Sam Harrison: Minister of Tax Policy and Outrage over Tax Policy, Member for Victoria-Duck Lake

Pitmaster Party (Official Opposition)

- Stephen Bagan, Opposition Whip, Member for North River Peace
- Erin Spence, Opposition House Leader, Member for Salmon Leg
- Patrica Masur, Party Leader, Member for Silk Road
- Maliki Suppin, Critic for Everything, Member for Ogopogo Sunshine

The Party to Rule Them All (Third Party)

- Emilio Caputo, Party Leader, Member for Rohan-Gondor
- Saige Lawson, House Leader, Member for Mordor
- Federico Cerani, Third Party Whip, Member for Lake-town

The bills were a separate matter altogether, though they comprised a significant part of the day. Each party was responsible for drafting its own legislation that, in rapid succession, was brought through the House on first reading, second/third reading, and finally Royal Assent if they survived.

The Government bill was intituled the *Wage Ratio Act* and served to ensure that an employee's wage must be a minimum percentage of the employer's take-home wages. However, the bill was not without its criticisms. Some members of the Opposition parties felt that the Government was meddling too much in the affairs of businesses, arguing instead that equality, not equity, is a more worthy pursuit. The bill withstood though, as the Speaker stood to support the Government on an even split.

The Opposition bill was intituled the *Deer Control Incentive Act* and was aimed at culling pesky deer populations and ensuring an abundant supply of the best steaks around. The Government was quick to shut down the bill, as was two-thirds of the third party, arguing that the bill was neither effective nor humane. Wisely, the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources, Agriculture, Rural Development & Long Ministry Names noted that deer are essential to the natural ecology of the province, and urged the Opposition to consider consultations with scientists and wildlife experts. Ultimately the bill died on the floor by a single vote, but with a valiant effort and a divided house.

The third and final bill, intituled the *Greater Mordor Transportation Authority Amendment Act*, was an ode to the third party's roots in Middle Earth and sought to establish a new rail line and sneak in an independent tax authority that would operate separately from the province. The power to tax and spend with impunity was an obvious point of contention brought forward by both Government and Opposition. After a plea to support Orcish sovereignty and refine bad policy later was made, the bill was passed in a tight division with a member of the Government betraying her caucus.

There were some memorable moments in the House that day. Each party had their own flavour, and each member played to it in full. The governing party was the House Party, whose name derived from their status as Government and a strong inclination toward backroom politicking to keep themselves in power. The official Opposition was the Pitmaster Party, whose roots were sown in the meat-eating sectors of the province, raising the steaks in the political rural-urban divide. From the third party arose a strange nationalism centred on the orcish peoples of Middle Earth.

The governing House Leader was often seen negotiating with Opposition parties in a bid to secure support for the Government's bill, which if successful, would have had all Opposition parties voting in favour of the bill and the governing party against it. To this day, no one understands why he did it.

The third party was best known for crafting speeches on the fly, having been ill-prepared to speak to any topic other than their own introductions. The third party leader was known for changing the party's direction on the fly. He argued for the destruction of all species not just deer, claimed "less regulation is better than more", committed the House to a provincial space program, and reinforced Orc nationalism, all of which were met with laughter and little applause.

Far too late did we realize that the Minister of Provincial Defence and Espionage and the third party Whip were members of Laketown-Wharfside and Lake-Town respectively, making for strong competition for the Middle Earth vote.

The premier took the chance to drag the Minister of Tax Policy and Outrage Over Tax Policy, reportedly stating in Question Period that "she would provide the minister with training on how taxes work" in response to an accusation from the Opposition that the Minister lost sight of his portfolio.

Despite many hiccups along the way, the interns, now former members of the house, walked from their experience with laughter. We celebrated a successful and educational session using limited knowledge from watching approximately five weeks of actual House affairs. For many of us, we hadn't seen the Legislative Assembly in weeks, and as Federico stated on his way out, it would likely be our last moments on the floor of the chamber. Eyeing the gilded walls and ceiling, it was a remarkable reflection of our time as interns. We walked from those chamber doors, perhaps wondering which of us would walk through them again.

ARTICLES AND ALUMNI

TURNING CRISIS INTO OPPORTUNITY

by Kathryn Haegedorn

My keen interest in healthcare and aspiration to work in the field, combined with my month of learning in the Ministry of Health, has allowed me to research and evaluate some of the key challenges facing our single-payer healthcare system. **New technologies and pharmaceuticals, increasing life expectancy, an aging population, and human resource management are just some of the factors that add to the increase in demand and cost of the system.**

Before the pandemic, I began to question whether ours was the best-equipped system to address these current and emerging issues. I have never believed in privatized healthcare, and instead started looking to countries with strong healthcare systems that employ a co-payer system of some type. Without systematic changes or an increase in funding to the system in Canada, it will be difficult for the government to deliver services in an effective way to meet the rising demand and cover the resulting financial burden in the long term. The healthcare system is about the well-being of people, but it also has to be considered from the perspective of how to provide the highest quality of care to the highest number of people with a limited number of resources.

However, this pandemic has allowed me to recognize the strengths of our system, and renewed my confidence in Canada's public healthcare system and its ability to respond to a crisis.

To me, perhaps the most remarkable thing I observed in healthcare systems across the country was how quickly they were able to adapt to this public health emergency and make widespread changes. Though the public sector isn't typically known for being agile and making systematic changes quickly, this crisis proved that our healthcare system absolutely can be nimble in a time of need.

The adoption and expansion of virtual care, increasing the scope of practice of pharmacists, and the ingenuity displayed in maximizing limited resources, such as ventilators, are just a few examples of innovative and effective p ractices adopted throughout the pandemic that demonstrate how swiftly changes that improve efficiency can be made when necessary.

I don't claim to be an expert in healthcare policy, and my research and learning has primarily taught me that it is an extremely complex and multifaceted issue. I'm not sure what the best system is, or what the future of healthcare will look like. But I do think that it is important to recognize how fortunate we are to live in a place with a robust and evolving healthcare system that is committed to overcoming challenges and embracing new strategies and approaches to improve healthcare delivery.

"If and when you need the healthcare system the most, you will always get what you need in Canada."

While it may be frustrating having to wait long periods for elective treatments and operations, the reality is that if and when you need the healthcare system the most, you will always get what you need in Canada.

VISITING OTTAWA: ZOOM EDITION

by Maliki Suppin

Over the last few years, one week of the BCLIP has been dedicated to visiting our nation's Capital to develop a greater understanding of federal politics and the federal public service. Our trip is facilitated and hosted by our federal counterpart, the Parliamentary Internship Program (PIP) interns. This year, due to physical distancing measures we were unable to make the journey to visit in-person. **Nevertheless, through an exceptional effort from B.C. Intern Sam Harrison and PIP Interns Myles Goodman-Vincent and Chris Coulson, we were able to visit Ottawa "virtually".**

Starting on June 1st and wrapping up on June 11th, we were able to meet virtually with a number of politicians and public servants. During that time, we had 22 Zoom meetings that were educational, engaging, and inspiring. The sessions provided us with an insight into federal issues, which complemented our work with provincial politics over the past six months. Although it was different to meet virtually, every speaker that we met with provided extra attention and oftentimes extra time to ensure that all of our questions were answered.

Our "virtual visit" began with a meeting with Supreme Court Justice (and former intern) Russell Brown. Justice Brown spoke of his time at the Legislative Assembly and his progression through law school, his legal career, and ultimately his seat on the Supreme Court of Canada.

After this, the speakers continued to inspire us with their impressive careers and commitment to public service. We were fortunate enough to meet with several politicians, including: Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, MP Michael Chong, MP Terry Beech, and the Honourable Minister Qualtrough. By casting aside partisanship, the MPs that graciously met with us provided us with insight into federal politics and life as an MP.

In addition to Justice Brown and the many MPs, we also had the opportunity to meet with members of the federal public service, political staff, and media personnel. To learn about the distinctions and parallels between the administration of the House of Commons and the Legislative Assembly we were fortunate to meet with both the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Clerk of the House of Commons.

We also met with political staff, including Ms. Shannon Carmont, Chief of Staff to MP Jenica Atwin; Astrid Krizus, speechwriter in the Prime Minister's Office; and Anthony Salloum, NDP Whip Assistant. To have a look inside the federal public service, we met with Mr. Scott Millar, Deputy Chief Policy & Communications at the Canadian Security Establishment; Mr. Sylvain Laporte, President of the Canadian Space Agency; and countless others. Our meetings with Mr. Millar and Mr. Laporte provided us with an insight into areas of public service not present at the provincial level. Additionally, we met with Stephanie Levits and Annie Bergeron to learn about the federal media landscape.

On behalf of the 2020 BC Legislative Interns, we want to extend our gratitude to the speakers we met with, the organizers Myles, Chris, and Sam, outgoing PIP Director Dr. Anne Dance, and the remaining PIP Interns for an unforgettable "virtual visit" to Ottawa! We appreciated your humour, kindness, and patience in letting us visit Ottawa from a distance.

REYNOLDS MODEL PARLIAMENT GOES VIRTUAL

by Kathryn Haegedorn and Stephen Bagan

For the past four years, the Flexible Studies program at Reynolds Secondary School (SD#61) has been working with the Parliamentary Education Office and the Legislative Interns to provide Grade 9 and 10 students with a Model Parliament experience.

This year, students were looking forward to their annual Model Parliament, which typically takes place throughout May and June. Students learn about the B.C. parliamentary system, assuming the roles of government officials, and "passing bills" in the Legislative Chamber at B.C.'s Parliament buildings.

As the pandemic evolved and students and interns began working from home, it became clear that the traditional Model Parliament would not be possible. However, it was important to rethink how we could provide this experiential learning opportunity for the students, and Stephen and Kathryn were up for the challenge. With the support of Parliamentary Education Officer Adriana Ayers and Reynold's teacher Brad Cunningham, eight students opted in for this year's virtual model parliament experience.

One exercise, called Minister's Inbox, placed students in the role of a Minister and forced them to make difficult decisions with a short deadline in a partially fictional scenario.

The students also chose to draft three bills on issues related to housing affordability, invasive species, and student safety.

From the start, the eight Flex Program students had open minds as we pitched to them ideas of how we could learn (through Zoom) about how a bill is passed, regional representation, and the challenging role that Cabinet Ministers play. Students met virtually with multiple MLAs, including the Minister of Education, who provided input and support on their bill writing.

While this year may look a little different than normal, in the future this virtual experience could serve as a model for other schools who are not located in Victoria to participate in the Legislative Assembly's educational programs and workshops to learn about parliamentary democracy in an hands-on way.

As interns, we are tremendously grateful for the opportunity to work with these engaged students, who we know will continue to stay engaged in B.C.'s parliamentary system. We also thank Brad and Adriana for taking the lead and providing amazing mentorship to all of us interns.

DEMOCRACY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

by Erin Spence

Prior to the internship, I worked at CityNet Yokohama, a Japanese organization that focuses on disaster risk reduction. My first day on the job, my boss took me out for an elaborate lunch, explaining that he would be eating his emergency rations for the next week and wanted to savour good food. When I asked why he would eat freeze-dried miso soup rather than a hot meal, he said: "We will all have to eat emergency rations at some time anyways. It is better to eat it now and be used to it, rather than being unprepared."

When the pandemic threw the normal parliamentary process into question, I thought about this conversation often as I watched the caucuses, ministries, and legislative staff switch rapidly into a new, uncertain online world. It seemed like everyone in the world of B.C. politics was learning how to adapt to living in emergency circumstances. Although I doubt anyone working at the Assembly wanted this transition, it was a beautiful illustration of how democratic institutions adapt and evolve in the face of adversity.

"The goal is not just to overcome a disaster, but to recover in a way that better prepares us to withstand future challenges."

From a political science perspective, the pandemic tested the integrity and trustability of democracies across the world. COVID-19 presented legislatures with an unprecedented challenge: how can we continue to govern democratically when elected officials cannot gather in their traditional chambers and halls? In British Columbia, I believe that the Legislative Assembly did an exceptional job of balancing public safety with continuing its important work.

One of the ways we adapted was by using new mediums of contact and communication. The normal daily rhythms of Question Period, caucus meetings, and late-afternoon binder gathering vanished. In their place, Zoom calls, Slack messages, and haphazardly assembled home offices became the bread and butter of the Legislative Assembly. This quick adaptation allowed parliamentary business to continue, even if it did not look like one might expect. Throughout my time with caucus, I was heartened to see how kind, patient, and flexible staff at the Legislative Assembly were, whether they were finding a way to get InDesign running to create the Gazette or completing research for our caucus assignments.

The Legislative Assembly also found a way to continue session without sacrificing democratic processes. The interns had the privilege of participating in early tests of the new hybrid model for the session. Rather than requiring MLAs to return to Victoria, virtual participation through video screens became the new approach. This decision allowed Members with health conditions or with vulnerable family members to continue their work in a way that was safe for their health.

One of the key principles of disaster risk reduction is the concept of **"building back better."** This final phase in disaster response refers to recovering, rehabilitating, and adjusting our procedures after a disaster has passed. The goal is not just to overcome a disaster, but to recover in a way that better prepares us to withstand future challenges. I am thankful that we live in a province where institutions are strong enough to withstand a crisis and then build back better after they have passed.

ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

by Stephen Bagan

Each year at the end of June, the BCLIP intern cohort joins a large alumni network of former interns, which dates back to the first cohort of 1976. Many former interns have gone on to have fascinating career paths, including in academia, the public service, and the private sector. One of those former interns happens to be my older brother, who inspired me to apply for the program and has always been a mentor and role model to me.

While I look forward to meeting many other BCLIP alumni in person over the coming years, I was fortunate to sit down (on Zoom) and hear from three former interns that all lead diverse and interesting lives. Thank you to Grace Lore, James Steidle, and James Bagan for sharing their experiences as interns and where they're at today. Here's what I learned:

DR. GRACE LORE
CLASS OF 2008

Grace and her family. Her husband Rob is a 2003 alumnus.

What was your favourite component of the Internship?
Grace's favourite part of the program was the caucus placement. She enjoyed, and continues to advocate for, traversing through different spaces in government: from the public service to caucus and hearing from folks in each of those different spaces. Grace valued the feeling of being an observer of the parts of government and seeing how all the parts are a whole.

What is your current profession? Does your former experience as an intern influence the work you do today?
Grace wears several hats in local, provincial, and federal politics, but she is currently a political science PhD lecturer at the University of Victoria. She also leads research on the effects of online harassment, particularly during the 2019 federal election. Grace recognizes that her experience as an intern, spending time in the basement of the Legislature talking to the people who she then later got to research, has greatly influenced and benefited her research work today.

Were there any outside events that shaped your internship?
2008 was a big year with the beginning of the financial crisis and the US Presidential election, but it was a pretty standard year for the internship program.

What did you do the year following the internship? Any advice to the current interns who are about to complete the program?
During Grace's internship, she was accepted to the London School of Economics' Masters in Gender and Social Policy program, which she deferred for a year to stay on with caucus. Following caucus, she became actively involved in local frontline work, such as at homeless shelters and the sexual assault centre. Grace recognizes that these experiences following the internship, despite being less predictable or secure as the Masters program, added tremendous value to her post-graduate studies. Summing up, she noted: "you don't have to get it right, right now."

A book recommendation (for the interns' summer reading list):
Esi Edugyan - The Second Life of Samuel Tyne

JAMES STEIDLE

CLASS OF 2005

What was your favourite component of the Internship?
James' favourite part of the internship was all the great relationships that he developed, many of which he maintains to this day and knows will be lifelong connections. However, seeing how political decision making functions during his caucus placement was a close second place.

What is your current profession? Does your former experience as an intern influence the work you do today?
James is currently the owner of a woodworking company based in Prince George, but he is also a passionate environmentalist and activist in the forestry sector. During his time as an intern he learned that a desk job would not suit his career path, and in a roundabout way steered him toward his woodworking profession. James does recognize, however, that his environmental advocacy work today is possible because of his exposure to government and policy making during the internship program.

Were there any outside events that shaped your internship?
2005 was a big year for BC politics because it was the end of Gordon Campbell's first term as Premier, with the NDP caucus having just two MLAs in the house. James was one of three interns who worked with the NDP caucus, and had a very large role in supporting the caucus with research. James remembers the intense dynamics in the Chamber and remembers the ability of the two NDP MLAs to frequently get under the skin of the large BC Liberal caucus.

What did you do the year following the internship? Any advice to the current interns who are about to complete the program?
Following the internship, James finished off his Masters of Public Policy program at Simon Fraser University, as well as spent a year working in caucus, which hired many new staff as the NDP caucus grew from two to 33 MLAs. He recommends that interns take advantage of job opportunities in caucus if they can. James adds that any opportunity to learn how government functions as well as the role that media plays in public discourse will be valuable.

A book recommendation (for the interns' summer reading list):
- The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate - Discoveries From a Secret World - Peter Wohlleben
- History of the Peloponnesian War - Thucydides

What was your favourite component of the Internship?
James' favourite aspect of the internship was all the educational and academic assignments. From going to Vancouver and having lunch in Jim Pattison's boardroom to tea with former Lieutenant Governor the Honourable Steven Point. Meeting experts in diverse fields provided eye-opening learning opportunities for James that stick with him today.

What is your current profession? Does your former experience as an intern influence the work you do today?
James is currently working as a crown prosecutor in Vernon, BC. The intern experience certainly influenced his drive to work in the public sector, and he recognizes the value of seeing how all three branches of government interact with each other. Beginning with the internship, James has continued to learn and appreciate the significant impact that government and government policy has on the lives of British Columbians.

Were there any outside events that shaped your internship?
The banking crisis that hit in the fall of 2008 and subsequent recession throughout 2009 played a major role for the 2009 interns. Similar to the 2020 interns, they were not able to travel to Ottawa that year. On top of the recession, spring of 2009 was also an election year, and there was a growing sense of uncertainty about growth in the economy and in the public service.

What did you do the year following the internship? Any advice to the current interns who are about to complete the program?
The year following the internship, James continued on working in the Opposition caucus, and he continued there until 2012 when he entered law school at the University of Victoria. He says to the current interns: "though the internship is fantastic, the best is still yet to come". Completing the internship marks the beginning of many future successes for all of us.

A book recommendation (for the interns' summer reading list):
Jurassic Park - Michael Crichton

James and his wife Jen.

JAMES BAGAN

CLASS OF 2009

ALUMNI UPDATES

45TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

It is hard to believe that we are coming up on the 45th year of the B.C. Legislative Internship Program. We had a wonderful turnout at the 40th anniversary celebration in 2016. We are optimistically planning towards an equally fitting event to be held next April or May, provided that it can proceed safely in keeping with public health guidelines. Please stay tuned for further details from the program and Alumni Association.

BCLIP ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

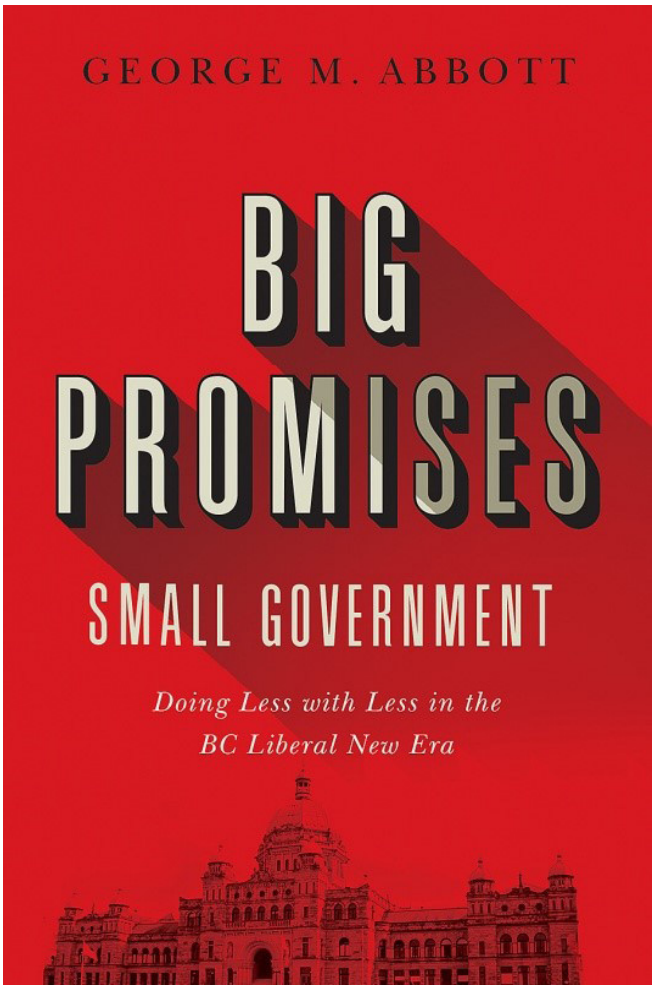
The recently-formed BCLIP Alumni Association continues to grow and is always looking for new ways to connect former Interns. Of the 400+ Alumni, we have over 190 of us connected via the Facebook page "BCLIP Alumni Association" where we post news, personal updates and upcoming events. Please join the page and share an update on where you are working or living these days. We hosted two pub nights in 2019, including a great event in November in Vancouver at the Red Racer Taphouse downtown. Unfortunately, COVID forced us to cancel our annual spring pub night in Victoria, but we will definitely be back next year. We are still working on a website and other ideas to connect Alumni, and are always looking for others to help out or share ideas. To the 2020 Interns: your experience was definitely a strange one, but we have no doubt each of you will carry on to unique and meaningful endeavors and look forward to meeting each of you at a future Alumni Event.

by Matt Dell

BIG PROMISES, SMALL GOVERNMENT

BY GEORGE ABBOTT

CLASS OF 1976



When Gordon Campbell's Liberal government won a massive majority in British Columbia in 2001, the premier immediately fulfilled his pledge to cut personal income taxes. *Big Promises, Small Government* reveals the consequences of dramatic tax policy changes on social programs. Campbell expected lower taxes to spur investment and growth. Instead, cutting taxes, while exempting health and education, left smaller ministries scrambling to absorb the cuts to maintain a balanced budget, with disastrous effects. This insider recounting of the real-world genesis, implementation, and consequences of a tax policy offers vital lessons to future governments and insight into the role of taxes in society.

As a special offer, UBC Press is offering 20% off pre-orders of the book to family and friends until August 31, 2020.

Order online at ubcpress.ca and enter the discount code 4879-20 at the checkout screen.

In Memory of James Cybulski

By Rhea Laube

"Every morning of every day I renew my admiration for the 'Man in the Arena' from Theodore Roosevelt's Citizenship in a Republic. 'Whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly… who at worst, if he fails, at the least fails while daring greatly.' An inspirational catalyst, my passion is to achieve great things, with women and men who strive valiantly and dare greatly on a daily basis."

-James Cybulski

James on a canoe camping trip at Lake Opeongo in Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario. Photo by Nathan Skolski.

After learning of James' passing, I noticed that he had written this on his LinkedIn profile. While many struggle to get out of bed in the morning, it wasn't hard for me to imagine James waking up and renewing his admiration for the work of Theodore Roosevelt. And as for striving valiantly and daring greatly in life, James most certainly did.

When I think of the B.C. Legislature it is easy for me to picture James walking down the corridors. He always seemed to be completely at home in the building and at ease with all of its comings and goings. He would be ready to answer a tourist's question at the drop of a hat. His eyes would especially light up if given the chance to speak Spanish, engaging in conversation with great flourish.

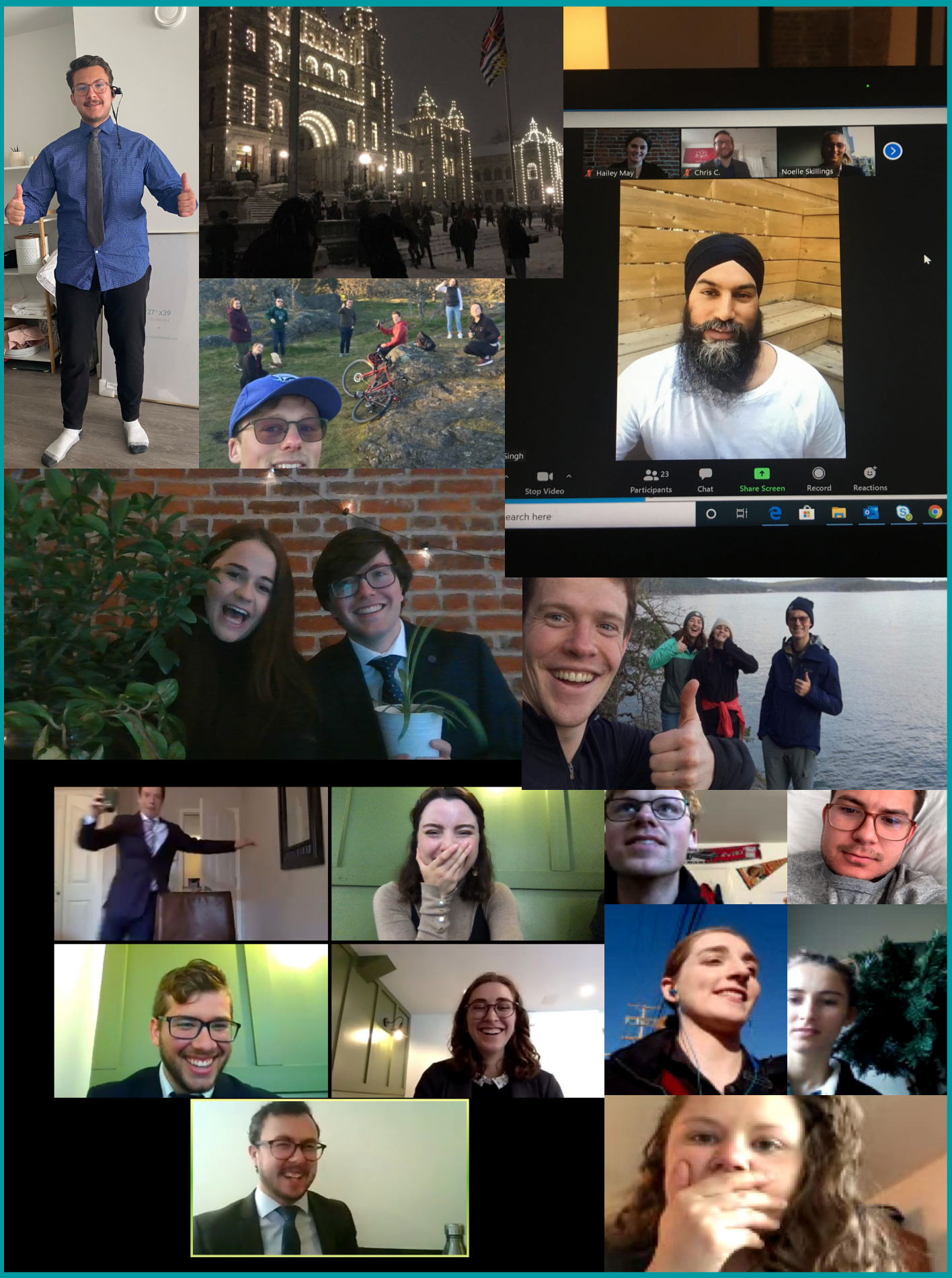
Our lives followed similar paths for a time with similar dreams and aspirations. He started working at the legislature a year before me in 2004. We then worked together for two summers as Tour Guides, donning the now retired 1950s flight attendant style teal blazers. In the second summer he became Tour Supervisor and I still maintain he was my favourite boss. He continued on as Legislative Gift Shop Coordinator and Outreach Officer, while I was a B.C. Legislative Intern. The following year, in 2009, he became an intern himself. I can imagine the other interns in his cohort would have learned a lot from his experience at the legislature. I know he would have happily shown them the ropes.

James took great pride in his time at the building. The relationships he built there were very important to him. He'd often be engaged in long conversations with security guards on the precinct. He especially admired and looked up to our Director of Parliamentary Education, Karen Aitken, who was a mentor to him.

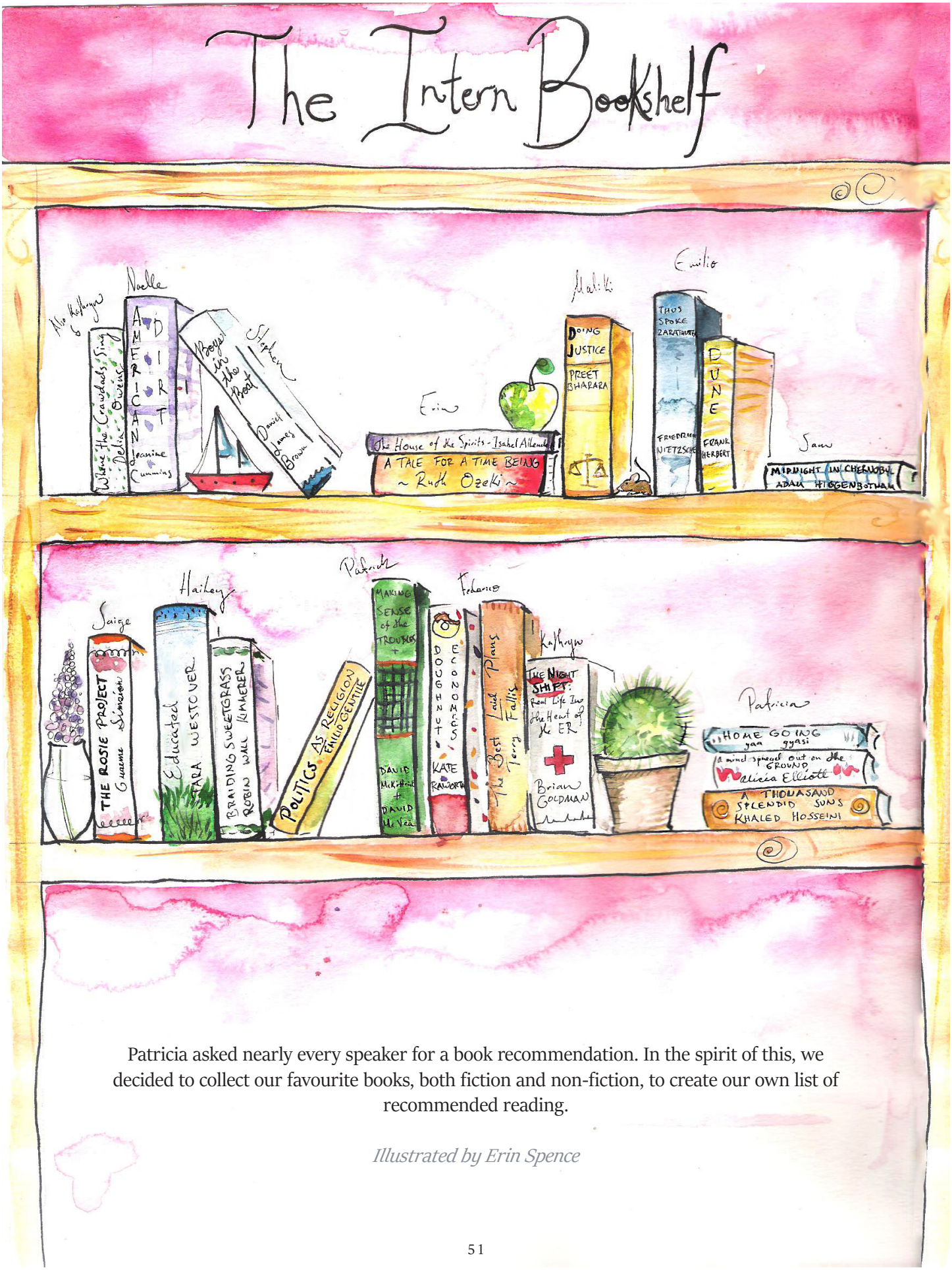
In 2010, James moved to Ottawa and I was happy to have a fellow islander in the nation's capital, having moved east myself a year earlier. We'd reminisce, comparing capitals and embracing "big" city life. Conversations with James were always lively. When he was passionate about something he couldn't talk enough about it. From politics, to fitness resistance training, to the poetics and justice of K'naan's lyrics (go listen to "Take a Minute") you'd never know where discussions would end up.

In our last conversations before he passed, I am grateful for the wisdom he shared with me to not get caught up in the working world with comparison and ambition. He reminded me to keep close to heart what truly matters in life. For him, that was his incredible partner Nadia, his family and loved ones. It was also the freedom of the wilderness. Having joined the Friends of Frontenac Park in 2018, he would drive to the provincial park from Ottawa to help the Wolf Survey Crew in-between his chemo treatments. In the end, he was able to follow his own advice. He didn't lose sight of what matters.

FOR OUR
OWN
MEMORIES


Hailey May
Chris C.
Noelle Skillings
Stop Video
Participants
23
Chat
Share Screen
Record
Reactions

The Intern Bookshelf



Patricia asked nearly every speaker for a book recommendation. In the spirit of this, we decided to collect our favourite books, both fiction and non-fiction, to create our own list of recommended reading.

Illustrated by Erin Spence

Whose Quote is it Anyway?

A collection of one-liners from interns, academics, and Members alike, under Chatham House rules.

"You're a [warning: unparliamentary language following] fascist hiding behind a granola veil."

"Terror reigns on both sides [in Question Period]."

"I'm not going down without a massive inconvenience."

"And hello to the interns - they sure didn't sign up for this."

"You're allowed to have a heart, you're allowed to have a brain, and you're allowed to have legs."

"I find that periods of popularity tend to be followed by unpopularity. I have been on both sides."

"I flew too close to the sun and fell off my yoga ball."

"I'd like to note that the members of the groundhog community find the term "woodchuck" offensive."

"The dinosaurs are dead."

"I dreamed a dream."

"Question Period is the nasty step-brother of Estimates."

"My style is Anne of Green Gables - but newer."

"Be the you the other interns think you are."

"Karen's cuthroat."

"Member, please keep your stand-up routine to the private chat."

ZOOM CALL BINGO:

INSPIRED BY OUR VIRTUAL VISITS

Federal staffer mentions our "ambitious" climate targets	Presenter pities the interns for not being there in person	Technical difficulties delay a call	Back/neck/shoulder/hip/stomach/brain pain	"No, Canada doesn't have that capability, but the U.S. can do that and more..."
Government agency: "Canada punches above its weight in this field"	Parliamentary Intern sets meeting rules, but the presenter insists those rules don't apply	Someone forgets to unmute	Presenter casually drops mind blowing statement and moves on immediately	"Is this confidential?" "Chatham House rul-" "Alright here's something I shouldn't tell you"
Host: "Time for one more question." BCLIPs: "I'll keep it short. So it's a two-part question..."	"To answer your question" *Screen freezes* "... Did that answer your question?"	You're wearing the Zoom mullet: Business attire on top, sweatpants on the bottom.	Smiling at an inappropriate time because of a private conversation	Person with non-descript title is incredibly interesting
Interns cringe over any of the following: 1. Dad jokes/puns 2. Shots at their caucus 3. Sports metaphor	Person who is young for their role makes us feel inadequate	When you're the moderator and there is no one else in line to ask a question	"Wait what, we got ____?!" "No, we got their Chief of Staff."	It's sunny while you're on a call, and immediately rains when it's over.
Intern with specific knowledge asks highly technical question	"We need to get more young people involved in politics/voting/lobbying/policy/government/etc."	Politician takes a shot at another politician	Side commentary occuring in BCLIP chat	Someone questions what's in another intern's cup

BCLIP 2020 LEXICON

Each intern has their own peculiarities. Patrick decided that this should be immortalized in the Gazette for future prosperity (and jokes).

to Patricia = to ask the question that everyone was thinking, but no one had the guts to ask

to Sam = to send a text/Facebook message/dm to the wrong chat

to Emilio = to “yeah, absolutely”

to Saige = to touch things without asking, and then ask to touch them afterwards

to Noelle = to ghost the group chat during pivotal events, but return for the jokes

to Kathryn = to refuse to waste plastics and/or words

to Maliki = to toss topical and often spicy content in the chat

to Erin = to “inadvertently” roast someone

to Stephen = to put the perfect GIF in the chat at just the right moment

to Hailey = to put a presenter on the hot seat with a very technical environmental question

to Federico = to consistently have a good time, regardless of what’s going on

to Patrick = to spend valuable government time making jokes in one form or another

B.C. GOVERNMENT ACRONYM WORDSEARCH

O F W H A M B W D N

F R P M E C C A L N

I O R N L F C D V D

J M I I A D A B R J

J D P M M L T G P C

D A T S C P M C F K

S D S D S D P M Z O

H O E P P G H F W M

E J A R L A O J Y F

F T N P R C O A V K

Acronyms are the lifeblood of government. Thirty of our favourite and most infamous acronyms are hidden in the box above - or are they just letters? Test your abbreviation aptitude by trying to find them all.

0-10: Intern
11-15: Junior Policy Analyst
16-20: Seasoned Staffer
21-25: Ministerial Assistant
26-29: Deputy Minister
30: Premier

One of the essentials of working from home is finding the perfect playlist to finish that research note or push through those pages of news releases.

Together, we built the ultimate intern list for productivity and fun.

Work from Home (feat. Ty Dolla $ign)
Fifth Harmony

Archie, Marry Me
Alvvays

Baby, I'm Yours - feat. Irfrane
Breakbot

I Think You're Alright
Jay Som

Los Angeles
The Midnight

Silver Lining
Mt. Joy

Les Yeux Noirs
Pomplamoose

Too Close For Comfort
Ella Fitzgerald

Stay Homa
Stay Homa

Nunca Es Suficiente
Los Angeles Azules

Everybody Wants To Rule The World
Tears For Fears

Night Shift
Lucy Dacus

Storytime With Emilio

Emilio's soothing, dulcet voice was perhaps the very best part of the internship. He has generously shared his gift with the Gazette.

What follows is an excerpt from *A Matter of Confidence* by Rob Shaw and Richard Zussman, read by Emilio with permission from the authors.

To access this exclusive content, please enter the Google Drive link below: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UIyP7IrBqqSvYgs-Axzjdv4-wPyxAb7b/view?usp=sharing.

TO THE CLASS OF 2020

This year has thrown about as many curve balls as we could have tried to bat (this is a sports reference for your bingo): from nation-wide protests, a global pandemic, and a social revolution, to changes to the way we conduct our work and how we interact with others in our daily lives. We came into this experience as rookies in January, wanting to work hard and learn the game from the top players, that is until the season was suspended and the rulebook thrown out the window. While disappointment at being sidelined was natural, we quickly realized that we were in the middle of history being written. Sports reference now over, the sentiment carries that this was more than just your average year.

We have witnessed and participated in the remarkable, rapid changes to an institution with a reputation for rigidity and tradition. We have seen partisanship put aside in the face of a crisis. We have witnessed the real-life shortcomings and triumphs of policies, politics, and systems in place by the institution we work in. This internship was promised as a unique opportunity to get behind the scenes, and on that it absolutely delivered.

It has felt like a race to the end with this last month involving our virtual tour of Ottawa, writing the Gazette, and returning to caucus for a bittersweet week and a half of the summer Session. Writing this in mid-June, we've come up for air for just long enough to smile and actualize what the past few months have brought us. In this moment, we are sitting back in the middle of the chaos and making a quiet note to ourselves that we'll remember this - and you all - fondly.

On our first day in the Legislature, we remember looking around the room at the ten other faces and feeling utterly bewildered at our life choices. This group of people with your political debates, Arts degrees, and ability to rattle off long questions on the work of independent officers of the Legislature seemed too foreign to relate with. Now when we look at your eleven faces on Zoom or FaceTime, we see some of the brightest, kindest, most passionate people we have the privilege of knowing. We have challenged and supported each other through every step, and we have no doubt in our minds that we will all change the world in our own small and large ways.

We opened this Gazette with a note of thanks to those who guided us throughout this experience, but we have yet to thank each other. It is only right that we now close it in tribute to us. And so, to Emilio, Federico, Kathryn, Noelle, Maliki, Patrick, Patricia, Saige, Sam, and Stephen: thank you, for every last minute. We'll be seeing each other.

Sincerely, Hailey and Erin

THANK
YOU,
UNTIL
WE MEET
AGAIN!