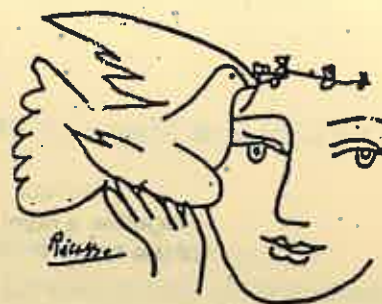


Peace Lines

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
.....Vancouver Branch..... Canadian Section



WILPF was founded 1915, The Hague

Vol. 20, No. 1

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PEACE AND THE OLYMPICS

The gods of Mt. Olympus are not entirely honoured by the Games held in their name.

When the Games of ancient Greece were revived in the late 1800s, they were revived certainly with the hope that PEACE between nations would be served. But one wonders, were we asked merely to believe in Santa Claus? The *symbolism* of the Olympics has continued to include the idea of peace but wars have followed one another with increasing sacrifice of people and goods.

Carefully-selected resplendent athletes still perform physical miracles. The idea of an accompanying period of peace between nations is all but lost (unless one counts the cessation of North American hockey league duels-of-violence for the duration!)

Now Canada has been host to the Winter Olympics 2010. While governments, including Canada's, devote enormous wealth to engines of destruction, we citizens openly and enthusiastically admire the Olympic 2010 athletes' feats of skill and endurance. We cheer and praise them wildly, gladly.

Vancouver's Mayor has carried the Olympic flame from Greece; great play has been made of Canadians carrying the flame further, zig-zagging around the country. Finally, a giant torch-cauldron has been lit.

The torch-cauldron was located behind a chain-link fence. What does it mean? It seems a GRIM THING has been wrapped around the Olympics. Do the Olympics any longer have anything to do with the idea of peace? Sadly, Great Gatherings these years just don't seem healthy for the world.

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The Life and Times of Helena Gutteridge, Vancouver's First Woman Councillor, 1937

When historian Irene Howard had spoken about Helena Gutteridge to a specially arranged gathering at City Hall in October 2009, few WILPF members had been able to attend. Obliging, Irene agreed to repeat her presentation for WILPF's fourth Saturday meeting in February. Irene's friend Pat MacBean assisted with readings.

Helena was born in 1879 in Chelsea, in what must be considered, in the London of that day, a Dickensian slum. Nearly sixty years later, March 1937, Helena joined eight male colleagues to be sworn in as aldermen to Vancouver City Council. How did she reach such heights?

Irene carefully recounted the story of Helena's early life in a working-class area of London, how she entered the tailoring trade, and learned to be a highly-skilled "cutter" – the top of the trade. She became very active in the movement for women's suffrage, joining the Pankhursts' Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).

In 1911, at the age of 32, Helena sailed to Canada with others who were "looking for work". Irene suggested that, in Helena's case, it was possibly "missionary" work that she intended – work in the movements for women's suffrage and for rights of workers.

Helena arrived in Vancouver on September 21, election day. She immediately joined the B.C. Political Equality League. She soon joined the Local Council of Women. She joined and became very active in the Journeymen Tailors Union. The Labor Temple at 411 Dunsmuir became the centre of her political life for several years.

Irene Howard is not one of those dry-as-dust historians. She is as careful and thorough as any. She is clearly in sympathy with her subject – Gutteridge – the first woman with "guts" enough to challenge and win through to a place on Vancouver City Council.

Unfortunately her short talk could only highlight most events contemporary with Helena's life; barely touch on the range of this vigorous woman's activities on behalf of reform. (Although records of the early years of WILPF in B.C. are scattered and the facts obscure, historian Howard convincingly placed Helena among the Vancouver Branch's founders.)

In closing, Irene paid tribute to WILPF's long history of striving for peace and justice. After quoting Stephen Spender's words on the "holy fire still burning", Irene remarked that while WILPF's flame was not large, it "flickered" still.

For the full story of Helena Gutteridge's life, see Irene Howard's [The Struggle for Social Justice in British Columbia: Helena Gutteridge, the Unknown Reformer](#), UBC Press,

Mary Rawson

LOST IN SPACE

*I shot an arrow in the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where.
Longfellow*

The Post Office let the Newsletter down.

The December issue of *Peace Lines* was mailed to members on Friday, December 6th. One clump of these newsletters, like the shot arrow, has landed we know not where... and neither, as it turns out, does the Post Office.

Some ten days after posting, on discovery that some members still had not received the December issue, inquiries were made (or tried to be made) at the P.O. Strangely, there is no Vancouver Postmaster, there is no local phone number to lodge inquiries, there is an ever-ringing unanswered Montreal number, and there are evidently automatic cut-off numbers. It was an experience surreal and frustrating. The "disappearance" remains unexplained.

Special regrets are extended to Anita Couvrette and to Dyane Brown. Anita's article about her 2009 visit to the Gaza with a Code-Pink delegation formed the meat of the December issue. Dyane's report about various Nanaimo stores' stocks of Christmas toys (War Toys and alternatives) was timely in December, may still so? The editor would appreciate a phone call from any member still without the December issue.

Illustration from Howard's book

Good Grief! A woman on City Council!
Cartoon by Fraser Wilson, Original on
Page 1, Vancouver Sun, 27 March 1937



An essay by Robert Holmes, President of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, from the 2009 fall issue of the BCCLA Newsletter.

OPENING MIND-LOCKED DOORS

“Hard times will forge a magic key,
to open every mind-locked door.”

The lyrical image struck me as apt for the times we are in and the work that the BCCLA does. At least it is apt if we recognize that by demanding that free speech be protected we open doors that otherwise would be mind-locked. That, in my view at least, can only be a good thing for people who understand the value of thoughtful exchanges. And history has shown that progress is often made when necessity, or at least urgency, is met by shared thoughts and open minds.

So, how is it that in spite of recognizing hard times and mind-locked doors, we, as an organization, hold to the confidence that by allowing everyone so inclined to speak and share their thoughts and everyone so inclined to hear those and think, we will all be better off? How is it that we think that we can open up closed-mindedness that otherwise would numb the world and render it unable to think its way through hard times and challenges? I think the answer comes from the realization that repression acts as confinement and liberality as openness. In terms of the human spirit, the latter has proven its rewards time and again; the former has simply shown itself to be a dead end.

The past year has provided more shocks to the world's economy than have been seen in a generation. Yet an undercurrent of confidence exists that we will see this through and do so in a manner that preserves the best of what our society stands for. That requires, of course, that we find the key to open what currently seems shut. There will be distractions. Some would have us focus on mind-locked doors, with modern equivalents to the *panem et circenses* from 2000 years ago. The step-by-step descent from civil libertarian values that the organizers of the Winter

Olympic Games in Vancouver have brought about bears testimony to much of that.

We have had to fight on multiple fronts to resist the mind-locking that VANOC and many in government have fallen prey to. Last fall VANOC made an enormous ad-buy, sucking up billboard and other advertising space in and around Olympic venues and along transit lines. \$40 million was spent to ensure that only approved messages were within view. The BCCLA complained, publicly and loudly. We complained to the Competition Tribunal, a federal agency that is supposed to ensure that anti-competitive behaviour is reined in. That sad excuse for a law enforcement agency opted to say, as bad waiters do in bad restaurants, “Not my table,” in response to our complaint. Apparently, the Competition Tribunal is only there to spend tax dollars inadequately policing unfashionable commercial enterprises not under the protective wings of governments.

When UBC, at VANOC's behest, issued new contracts that sought to impose on students living in residences a ban on putting up signs and posters “visible” from a stadium where Olympic events were to take place, we protested. Fortunately, UBC had the good sense to issue a statement clarifying that students' free speech rights would not be impacted. Mind-locking is obviously not what institutions of higher learning are supposed to be committed to. Yet what does the fact that VANOC stipulated for such a thing tell you?

It tells you much the same as VANOC's missive to municipal authorities urging cities to prohibit political leafleting or signs along the Olympic Torch Relay Route. The BCCLA protested that as well, warning that to buckle under to such anti-democratic suggestions

continued .

continued

would, in a legal sense, violate constitutional guarantees, and in a political and social sense, violate the dignity to which each person in Canada is entitled to.

The Integrated Security Unit has refused to provide assurances that it will not have law enforcement officers act as *agents provocateurs* attempting to stir up violence at demonstrations as was witnessed with other international events.

Neither would they provide assurances that their surveillance would not spill over into infiltrating protest groups and taking on leadership roles so as to commit and induce wrongdoing. Sad, sad, sad displays of mind-locked doors.

The City of Vancouver has opted to pass bylaws that purport to ban demonstrations that constitute disturbances and nuisances, while expressly protecting "celebratory" demonstrations.

Yet we protested those measures as well. Before council meetings, we appeared and challenged what was being done. In editorials, interviews, and letters, we raised our concerns and explained our position. We put out news releases and encouraged a free people to wake up and open the mind-locked doors that some in authority thought they could keep closed.

It is ironic that in the midst of this, we have the display of the CBC broadcasting ads from Olympic sponsors crowing about the event,

yet refusing ads from others they regard as "political." Mind-locked.

There is more: the Vancouver Police approaching protest groups attending council meetings, police seeking to have protestors register in order to protest, protest pens as "safe assembly zones", hundreds of cameras placed in public spaces to monitor and record the movements of private citizens, and the City announcing plans to legislate

authorization for limits on rights and demonstrations. More and more authorities tend to regard Charter violations

as simply the "ordinary course of doing business" and section 1 of the Charter's saving provision for "reasonable limits" as meaning anything that those holding office in any of the three branches of government think helps their exercise of power. Each of those represents an effort to keep mind-locked doors closed.

The tendency of some to be economical with the truth cannot be too long maintained if free expression and debate is allowed to flourish. Others may repeat mind-locked phrases over and over again. But under the scrutiny of criticism, dissent and debate, they will be shown for what they are and the "magic key" to unlock mind-locked doors - the key of free expression and thought - will do its work.

"Hard times..." from *The Plague and the Moonflower*, R. Harvey composer, R. Steadman libretto.



DRONES

= WAR MORE

HORRIBLE

From a full-page article in the Vancouver Sun, February 25, 2010, from the Los Angeles Times

CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. - From his apartment in Las Vegas, Sam Nelson drove to work through the desert along wind-whipped Highway 95 toward Indian Springs.

Along the way, he tuned in to XM radio and tried to put aside the distractions of daily life - bills, rent, laundry - and get ready for work.

Nelson, an air force captain, was heading for his day shift on a new kind of job, one that could require him to kill another human being 7,500 miles away.

Seated in a padded chair inside a low, tan building, he controlled a heavily armed drone aircraft soaring over Afghanistan. When his shift ended, he drove 40 minutes back through the desert to the hustle and neon of Las Vegas.

Drone pilots and crews are the vanguards of a revolution in warfare, one the U.S. military and intelligence agencies have bet on heavily.

The first Predator carrying weapons was rushed to Afghanistan just four days after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Today, the air force is spending nearly \$3 billion a year buying and operating drones, and is training pilots to fly more unmanned than manned aircraft. Demand is so strong, even non-pilots such as civil engineers and military police are being trained.

More than 7,000 drones of all types are in use over Iraq and Afghanistan. The planes have played an integral part in the offensive now being carried out in Marja, Afghanistan, by Marines, British and Afghan troops.

WOMEN AND THE OLYMPICS

Vancouver Branch of WILPF sponsored an evening panel discussion on the topic “Women and the Olympics” on February 7, 2010, just six days before the opening of the Games. Some fifty to sixty members of the public, mostly young women, attended.

Branch member Noga Gayle organized the meeting at the always-friendly space provided by the Rhizome Café. The panelists were City Councillor (and WILPF Canada president) Ellen Woodsworth, and Micheal Vonn, Policy Director of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

Having first made the point that women were excluded from participating in the original ancient Olympics, Ellen drew attention to a number of negative events related to the Olympics on our doorstep. The refusal of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to permit women ski-jumpers to participate was one sore point. Even more disturbing was the resulting Supreme Court of Canada decision allowing the IOC to override Canadian Charter rights. Of a different order were the facts about disproportionate amounts being spent on physical structures for the actual Games (e.g. the luge) and for “security”. Security alone would cost one billion (that is, one thousand million) dollars.

Ellen packed her brief remarks with facts on funds, what funds were allotted for, and for what they were not, judging whether Olympics 2010 were affecting women for good or ill.

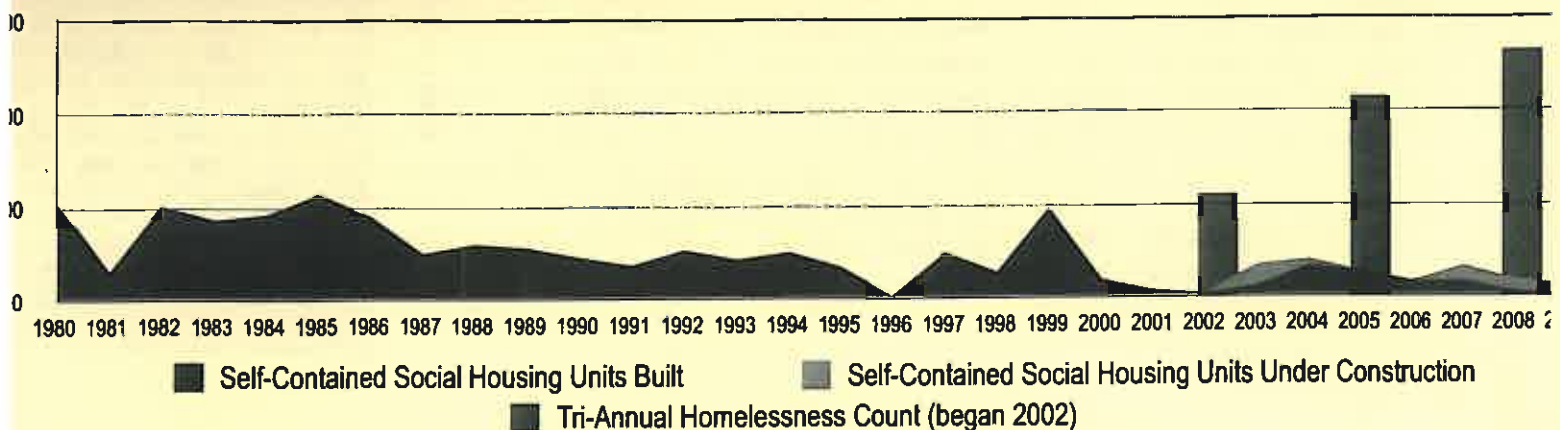
Micheal, a lawyer, offered her comments about “Women and the Olympics” in the context of a broad concern for civil liberties and the rule of law. Two matters dealt with by the Supreme Court of Canada in recent weeks were most disturbing to her mind:

- In the case of Omar Khadr, the Court decided that the Canadian government had “heinously abused” Khadr, yet had provided only narrow grounds for setting things right;
- In the case of the women ski-jumpers, the Court decided that VANOC had discriminated against women but that VANOC and the IOC are entities outside the Court’s jurisdiction.

Micheal did not consider the Olympics 2010 as “just another downhill event”. It was proving to have “a dangerously authoritarian infrastructure”. Large mega-gatherings, including the Olympics, “have become de facto Trade Shows for the billion-dollar security and military business”.

In her view, Olympics 2010 has turned the idea of “a threat to the Games” as coming not from the outside but from the inside. The number one threat is now “protesters”. The BCCLA has plenty of evidence of this attitude. It is concerned that *agents provocateurs* were to be employed, as they have been before. It is also concerned that the Vancouver Police Department has purchased a military device for crowd control, a sonic weapon. As an aside, she stated that megaphones were very effective, and much cheaper.

City of Vancouver Social Housing & Homelessness Growth 1980 – 2009



Article below reproduced from Peace Magazine, Toronto, October/December 2008 issue

Today Hanna Newcombe is probably the most respected peace researcher and activist in Canada. Born in Prague, she came to Canada as a refugee from Hitler and earned a doctorate in chemistry, marrying another chemist, Alan Newcombe, whom she persuaded to switch careers to peace studies. They ran the Peace Research Institute Dundas from the basement of their bungalow and gained international admiration. Hanna kept writing brilliant essays on an amazing array of topics — from cosmology to theolo-

gy to Gaia to enzymes — without bothering to publish them. Alan died several years ago and Hanna now lives in a retirement home, but she continues to write. This is her most recent essay. Two years ago she was awarded the Order of Canada. We have been building a web site to make available all her numerous essays. Please have a look at the collection and, if you think they are as creative as we do, mention them to your friends. This modest woman deserves wide recognition! <www.hannanewcombe.com>

Natural Selection as a Ratchet Effect

BY HANNA NEWCOMBE

“We climb Mount Improbable by using the ratchet effect.”

A friend once asked me how biological evolution (and embryonic development) can happen, being against the second law of thermodynamics, which requires movement from order to disorder, toward greater entropy.

I said, “Something weird happened on this planet, and maybe on this planet only.”

But my friend insisted, “Nevertheless, it happened, so it requires an explanation.” I was stumped and have wondered about it ever since. How *do* we climb Mount Improbable against the laws of nature?

Finally it came to me. We use the ratchet effect, which permits only forward movement and applies a brake against backward movement.

A ratchet works like the toothed wheel in the escapement of a watch, allowing time to move only forward, not backward. Or it works like the toothed rail on a mountain-climbing railway, going up in spite of gravity. I once tried it in a car, stepping with my right foot on the starter instead of the accelerator and then with my left foot on the brake. It

moves forward only in little jumps using electrical energy, not tapping gasoline energy. Not very quick, not efficient, but it moves only forward. It is a ratchet.

Any partly ordered pattern can move in two directions. Either to less ordered patterns, which would be breakdown, or to more ordered patterns, which would be breakthrough. A breakdown is very much more ordered (frequent) while breakthrough is very rare, but this climb to less probable structures is what constitutes climbing Mt. Improbable.

In evolution, natural selection loads the dice against entropic degradation (breakdown) by making the degraded patterns less viable (survivable) by natural selection, and favoring the (much rarer) breakthrough by making it more viable. Natural selection works like a ratchet, against breakdown. Genetic mutations are usually harmful, rarely beneficial. Yet we climb Mount Improbable with their help, while preserving the law of entropy. Natural selection is cruel, but effective.

It should be possible to make a calculation, using statistical mechanics (the micro-version of thermo-dynamics) of how much time it would take for evolution by natural selection to reach the present state. It is a very slow process, but we may find the approximate time. If

this agrees with reality, it should prove the soundness of this theory. The agreement would need to be only an order of magnitude.

Where is human evolution headed in the future? The great philosophers, sages, scientists and artists like Socrates, Jesus, Buddha, Rousseau, Einstein, Newton, Freud, Goethe, Schiller, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Shakespeare, Mozart, Beethoven, etc. did not seem to be favored by natural selection. Mozart died young; his baby suffered a crib death. Goedel and Turing committed suicide. Yet French philosopher and scientist Teilhard de Chardin traced the development from Alpha to Omega in the mental realm, the noosphere. Perhaps, in addition to the push of the ratchet in the bodily realm, there is a pull forward in the mental or spiritual realm. Teilhard, the Christian theologian, certainly thought so. But I cannot speculate any further. I am beyond my brain power already. Let us hope (and work) that point Omega is reached before human extinction occurs.

Hang on to life, since once you let go, there is no way to return. *Omne vivum ex vivo* (“all life comes from life”) as proved by Louis Pasteur. There is no spontaneous generation. The original way up may have been unique. ■

NOTICES

The Women Are Coming

Sunday, 7th March, Enright program, CBC radio documentary about the Canadian "Abortion Caravan" of March 1970. Presented in recognition of International Women's Day. Available in podcast.

Westcoast Leaf Equality Breakfast.

Friday 19 March, 7:30 a.m. Vancouver Fairmont Hotel.

"The Strangest Dream"

Saturday, 27 March, NFB film about scientist Joseph Rotblat. Planned to be shown next meeting of WILPF. Hewett Hall 49th & Oak.

Women's History Fair at Vancouver Public Library

Saturday 10th April. It will be an all-day affair. WILPF has applied for a table.

Vancouver Historical Society

Thursday 22 April at the Museum, 1100 Chesnut, 7:30 p.m. "Women on Ice: The Early Years of Women's Hockey in Western Canada". Speaker Wayne Norton.
The Denman Arena was home not only to the Vancouver Millionaires but also to the Vancouver Amazons, an all-female hockey team.

Branch Memberships due for 2010

*** Still only \$35 annually ***

New Treasurer Judy Davis will be glad to receive contributions either at Branch meetings or by cheque to WILPF through the mail at our P.O. Box 365.

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