

THE SPEAKER

Spring 2008
79th Session, Issue 1

News from the Youth Parliament of BC Alumni Society

Message from the Chair

Over 130 students applied to attend the 79th Parliament in 2007, by far the greatest recorded number of applicants. The reduction in the registration fee permitted by the generous grants from the Coast Capital Foundation and the Victoria Foundation appears to be a significant factor accounting for the increased interest in BCYP.

Our Fundraising Committee chaired by Simon Philp will continue their work over the upcoming months to identify and secure additional grants from community and private foundations as well as initiate other fundraising measures. If you have ideas to share, please contact Simon at simonandley@telus.net.

At the Annual General Meeting in November, we welcomed two new Senators, Danica Wong and Claire Marchant. Danica is working on her Masters in Political Science at UBC and is presently a Legislative Intern in Victoria. Claire is in her first year of law at the University of Calgary. Both have already provided thoughtful contributions to committees and to Senate and we welcome their contributions.

With Senators in Ottawa, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria, we are teleconferencing nearly every meeting through the generous assistance of Ernst & Young where our Treasurer, Rahim Meghji, works. Ernst & Young also made a significant donation to the Society which was transferred to the Youth Parliament Fund at the Victoria Foundation. Thank you! If your business is interested in contributing the community, please suggest a donation to the Walter S. Owen Fund at the Vancouver Foundation or the Youth Parliament Fund at the Victoria Foundation.

Following Session, our Sessional Organizing Committee has engaged in an extensive review of the quality of the annual session, our code of conduct, and general arrangements. This work builds on the Senate-Parliament meeting in July 2007 where we brainstormed possible changes to offer a strong program of interest to members. The Sessional Organizing Committee, chaired by Julia Lockhart, will provide its recommendations to Senate in May and begin implementing approved changes over the summer and into the fall as we prepare for the 80th Parliament in 2008.

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Kerry Simmons as Madam Speaker

The Speaker in your Inbox

If you would like to receive your next copy of The Speaker electronically via E-mail rather than by regular mail, please send Negin Mirriahi (alumni.affairs@bcyp.org) an e-mail indicating your full name, current mailing address, and e-mail address. The Youth Parliament of BC Alumni Society maintains complete confidentiality and does not sell or trade any names, addresses or alumni information. All information you supply is kept confidential and secure and will be used to distribute the Society's official newsletter and information about the BC Youth Parliament. The Speaker will be sent to you as a .pdf document and will require Adobe Acrobat Reader (free to download) to view it.

Message from the Registrar

At Session this year, we had a full House of 93 members, with close to an even regional spread across the Island, Lower Mainland, and Interior. We also had a record number of applications received, probably thanks largely to this year's greatly reduced registration fee compared to the last several years. Young people across BC continue to be interested in what BCYP offers, and the Board is continuing to seek further sources of grant funds and solicit donations from alumni and the community in order to be able to keep the registration fee as low as possible.

Of this year's 93 members, 54 were from the Lower Mainland, 25 from the Interior, and 14 from Vancouver Island. The last number is particularly heartening as it represents only one member short of our possible number of seats for the Island, a Island better representation than we have had at Session for several years and with a fair number of members from the central and north Island. Other interesting facts are that this year's membership includes three pairs of siblings and four children of BCYP alumni.

This year as for many years now, transportation of Lower Mainland and Interior members between Vancouver and Victoria was arranged with Pacific Coach Lines. A special "thank you" is due to PCL for providing the Society with a generous discount on the charter rate for their surfaces, allowing us to continue to provide members with a comfortable and efficient travel experience. PCL's excellent service and generosity is greatly appreciated.

Dora Turje
Registrar



Thank you for Your Support!

Message from the Chair

(continued from Page 1)

I chair our Risk Management Committee which is beginning a discussion of formal information reporting to Senate by members organizing projects in BCYP's name. To date, this reporting has been ad hoc and informal and we hope to have a standard form providing key information on which Senate can assess the risk of the activity and also be more aware of the many activities individual Parliamentarians carry out.

The Camp Steering Committee, chaired by Bea McCutcheon, has already had three meetings with the Camp Administrator, Tyler Allison. Tyler is looking for a director, nurse and cook for Camp Phoenix. Please contact him at tyler.allison11@gmail.com if you have information of people who may be willing to volunteer for any of those positions.

Alan Ip is continuing as the Board's representative on the Regional Youth Parliament Management Committee overseeing the planned five RYPs this year. Parliament has made a commitment to revitalizing RYPs and particularly improving the organization and increasing the experience of a larger group of potential house servants. Parliaments in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Castlegar, New Westminster and Nanaimo are expected to occur between now and the end of May.

As you can see, the Board has its hands full with both the usual activities and additional activities as we strive to keep Youth Parliament relevant to today's youth and a secure and safe activity. As always, if you have suggestions, comments or inquiries, please call me at 250-480-9145 or email me at kerrysimmons@hotmail.com.

Kerry Simmons
Chair

The Alumni Society Needs Your Help!

We would also ask at this time that you consider donating to the Alumni Society to help us make next year's session a success. As the official sponsor, we organize and resource the annual session for youth from across the province. Making a donation to the Youth Parliament Alumni Society ensures that young people from around the province can participate in an organization that benefits not only themselves but also their community.

Please send your donation (a cheque payable to *Youth Parliament of BC Fund*) to:

The Youth Parliament of BC Alumni Society, c/o Rahim Meghji
2 – 3139 Smith Avenue
Burnaby, BC V5G 2S8

Who are the Senators?

Kerry Simmons, Chair & Risk Management Committee Chair: kerrysimmons@hotmail.com
Negin Mirriahi, Vice Chair & Alumni Affairs: neginmirriahi@gmail.com
Julia Lockhart, Executive Director & Sessional Affairs Committee Chair: juliakl@interchange.ubc.ca
Dora Turje, Registrar: dora.turje@gmail.com
Alan Ip, Chief Returning Officer & Regional Youth Parliament Committee Rep: alan.cl.ip@gmail.com
Rahim Meghji, Treasurer: rmeghji@gmail.com
Natalie Barnes, Privacy Officer: natalie.barnes@gov.bc.ca
Katrina Wang, Secretary: katrinalwang@yahoo.ca
Bea McCutcheon, Camp Steering Committee Chair: bmccutcheon@pacificcoast.net
Simon Philp, Fundraising Committee Chair: simonandley@telus.net
Jenn Jay: dust_puppy76@hotmail.com
Sang-Kiet Ly: sangly@shaw.ca
Claire Marchant: clmarcha@ucalgary.ca
Danica Wong: danica.wong@telus.net
Laurel Hogg, Premier: ldh1@sfu.ca

This Year's BCYP Award Recipients Are...

Bond Shield: Emilie-Anne Paul, Victoria
Terasen Inspiring New Member Award: Rosie Pidcock, Vancouver
Fisi Award For Service: Tyler Allison, Penticton
Donald Fergus Paynter Memorial Award: not given this year

Camp Phoenix News

At the 79th Session of the British Columbia Youth Parliament, the members unanimously passed the Camp Phoenix Act. As Minister of Camp Phoenix, I am excited to inform you that this project is still going strong and is a point of pride of ours, and I hope of yours as well. Camp Phoenix this year will be held at Camp Miriam on Gabriola Island from August 23rd to 30th. If you have any questions or wish to help out in any way, shape or form I would love to hear from you by e-mail at tyler.allison11@gmail.com or phone at 604.765.3408.

Best wishes,

Tyler Allison
 Minister of Camp Phoenix

WANTED

Camp Director, Cook, Nurse

BCYP's project, Camp Phoenix, runs August 23 – 30, 2008 at Camp Miriam on Gabriola Island. If you would like more information about these volunteer positions to help BCYP find great candidates, please contact Tyler Allison, Minister of Camp Phoenix, at tyler.allison11@gmail.com or at 604.765.3408.

Visit Us Online:

<http://www.bryp.org/alumni>

Auction News

I am writing on behalf of the Cabinet of the 79th BCYP to cordially invite you to this year's *Sweet Dreams Dessert & Auction*.

This year, the Auction will be held at the Quilchena Golf & Country Club at 3551 Granville Avenue in Richmond. The evening will include a delectable dessert buffet, an elegant silent auction, and many exciting live auction lots. The festivities will begin at 6:30, with dessert being served around 7:30, so make sure to save some room after dinner!

Tickets will be \$26 for one, and a pair for \$50. All proceeds from the evening will go towards this year's many service activities, most notably Camp Phoenix, which will be held on Gabriola Island, off the coast of Nanaimo. For those of you who do not know, Camp Phoenix is the weeklong residential summer camp that BCYP has been running for more than 30

Reflections by Kerry Simmons

Sitting on the side of the Coquihala with my sister, Julie, and Bea McCutcheon, singing camp songs waiting for a tow truck to take our broken down car into the Okanagan where we were going to do camper recruitment.

Receiving a personalized note in the mail from Camp Administrator Erin Lemon telling me that I would be the "star of the Camp".

Crying in the hotel staircase on the shoulder of Victor Tuomi, as I was infuriated beyond belief at the Leader of the Opposition Chilwin Cheng's challenges to my government's legislation.

These are some of the many many memories I have from my time in Youth Parliament. Like many of us who hold this organization dear, and met our best friends or spouses through BCYP, the people and moments in Youth Parliament helped me to figure out what I wanted from life, how to influence other people, and helped me learn about our parliamentary system - the good and the bad.

I've noticed over the past two years in particular how different Parliament is now from when I was a member. Most members can't drive a car or don't have access to one. It is very rare for members to travel outside their own region to a BCYP event. Facebook and email have been substituted for face-to-face personal interaction.

The words "sessional affairs" only has one meaning, not two. And at Session, the cut and thrust of debate, the tension between Opposition and Government, and (dare

years now, and we would like it to run another 30! This is only possible with your continued support, and what better way to show your support than coming out for some delicious cakes, pies, pastries, and fruit platters?

You will find an invitation and ticket order form with this newsletter. Feel free to tell your friends, family, coworkers, and anyone else you might know, and return the order form with a cheque made out to the British Columbia Youth Parliament. Please see the ticket order form for further details.

Yours in Parliament,

Jeremy McElroy
Minister of Community Fundraising

I say) the eloquence of Question Period is simply not what it once was. Almost everything is done by advance agreement and scripted. The passionate speeches of Ken Donohue, Jason Herbert or Jorj McWhinnie aren't there.

These observations aren't just longing for the old days or the view of an adult who thinks she could do it better. They are facts. While there have always been stories of "when I was in Youth Parliament" as each generation passes through, these days I think alumni need to be telling more of those stories to current Parliamentarians. Particularly we should tell the stories related to the parliamentary intrigue: surprise opposition motions, cabinet secrets, theft of budget estimates - you know the stories - you lived them.

Each one of you reading this has a story about parliament. Your peers, your generation, who did what, said what, who inspired you and why. I think we need to tell those stories and inspire these next generations to build their oratory skills, and understand that being a parliamentarian isn't just the technical skill. It involves the art of persuasion.

Over the upcoming year I hope to talk about how to teach some of these skills to our Parliamentarians, and at the very least start telling our stories. Don't be surprised if you get a phone call asking you to share a story or two at Session or Legislative or Shadow Cabinet Weekend. Perhaps the next time you meet a current Parliamentarian, you might take them for coffee and share one of those stories. Although they will look at you in disbelief, you'll at least give them an idea of what they might do when they are back in Victoria at Session.