

Opinion



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EDITORIAL

Boston Strong

Congratulations, Kathi Travers. Better luck next year, Patty Stewart. Sorry your Cardinals came up short in the World Series, but how about those Blues?

They are looking like contenders for the Stanley Cup this season. For Travers, it's been quite a roller coaster ride this year. Prince George's best-known Boston girl is back in town after her exile for most of this year in Blind Bay, Washington. That shouting you may have heard Thursday night was her cheering for her beloved Red Sox as they won their third World Series in 10 years and their first at home at Fenway Park since 1918. It was a glorious triumph for Boston (pronounced "BAH-ston" but say it through your nose, not your throat), the baseball, the city, all New England residents and the departed ones like Travers.

The Red Sox finished last year in last place, but are World Series champions again. All of Boston's teams have played with heavy hearts this year, after three people were killed and more than 250 injured during the Boston Marathon bombing.

The city rallied under the Boston Strong phrase. The Red Sox wore the logo on their left sleeves all season long and mowed the logo into the grass at centre field at Fenway. The city didn't have to wait long for Boston Strong to manifest itself. Almost a month to the day after the bombing, the beloved Bruins pulled off one of the most unlikely Game 7 comebacks ever.

Behind 4-1 with 10 minutes to play in Game 7 against the Toronto Maple Leafs – and still down two goals with less than two minutes to play – the Bruins tied it and then won it in overtime.

Although the Bruins eventually fell to the Chicago Blackhawks in the Stanley Cup final, Boston was back, as loud and proud as ever. Some overzealous writers and commentators have unfortunately said the Red Sox win is easing the wounds caused by the bombing. Only in the world of sports journalism could a group of millionaires winning a child's game somehow soothe the pain of the families of the dead and injured – dozens of whom lost limbs in the attack.

Both events are historic, but only one of them is actually important. Nevertheless, the Red Sox victory and the incredible spring run of the Bruins is emblematic of the Boston community's resiliency and its refusal to be forever tarnished by tragedy. So good on ya, Boston.

I still haven't forgiven you for breaking my heart two years ago in Game 7 against the Canucks – but the weekly therapy goes well, thanks for asking.

—Managing editor Neil Godbout

School bill flawed

The Harper government's draft First Nations education bill holds promise for schools on reserve. Schools will be expected, finally, to hold to a minimum number of school days and to educational standards, now absent in the Indian Act. But conspicuously absent is any talk of Ottawa's obligation to ensure they have the money to do the job.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt says the draft act is built on the advice of a national panel that crossed the country for input into a new First Nations education act. That panel, however, highlighted Ottawa's inadequate funding to reserve schools – thousands of dollars less per student than public schools get – as central to pathetic graduation rates among reserve residents. The draft bill would see First Nations bands, school committees and principals, or education authorities if resources are pooled regionally, assume control of education – setting curriculum that meets provincial standards, services and setting goals for student achievement to ready them for the job market or post-secondary education. Some First Nations groups already are rejecting the bill for lack of consultation, but also because it mandates an inspector (of their choice) to hold bands to the standards required. First Nations deserve better assurance of adequate funding they can expect within the act's regulations.

— Winnipeg Free Press



Liquefied natural gas a cure-all

Liquefied natural gas is all things to all people, and that includes former B.C. Liberal leader Gordon Wilson.

Premier Christy Clark brought the potential benefits of LNG development to the Vancouver Island Economic Summit in Nanaimo on Wednesday.

Earlier this week, the Canada West Foundation recommended downsizing expectations, saying B.C. should prepare for a more modest boom.

That advice was dead on arrival, as far as Clark is concerned.

She was as wildly enthusiastic as ever at the summit, saying north-coast LNG benefits will extend to Island residents, and the Island could even wind up with an LNG plant of its own.

"I'm going to say many thousands of jobs on Vancouver Island as a result of natural gas if one of those projects go ahead," she told reporters after her speech.

"It will change the face of Vancouver Island forever once those opportunities come here. Think about the impact that forestry has had over the years. This is going to be for Vancouver Island, I think, what forestry was 50 years ago."

Campbell River and Port Alberni are being checked out as potential sites by Asian investors who are in the early stages, several years behind proponents of Kitimat and Prince Rupert sites.

But Clark stressed the benefits are so mammoth the whole province would gain, no matter where plants are built.

And leading the effort to disperse the benefits as widely as possible will be none other than Wilson, former leader

In The Fast Lane



LES LEYNE

of two parties (Liberal and Progressive Democratic Alliance), former New Democrat cabinet minister and former NDP leadership candidate.

The most relevant recent entry in his colourful political career was his sudden endorsement of Clark during last May's election campaign.

Was that why he was picked out of nowhere to become the LNG-Buy B.C. advocate? No, said Clark. It's because "he is one of the greatest salesmen I have ever met."

She said he understands public policy: "He gets it."

He'll be charged with travelling around B.C., talking to communities about the opportunities and urging thousands of companies to register for chances to supply the industry.

The LNG play is dominated by big multinationals who have established business relationships. But Clark said they want to put down roots and make new friends in B.C.

Wilson and Clark clashed in the legislature during his time as an NDP cabinet minister. Clark said the relationship wasn't always sunny, but she has "put politics behind me."

With all the emphasis on LNG in the future, there wasn't much Clark could bring to the table in the here and now.

She wrangled \$15 million for more

Malahat highway improvements, but it was a pretty skimpy effort.

At an earlier transportation forum, short-term problems and long-term visions were aired.

B.C. Ferries president Mike Corrigan put the best face possible on the ferry system's financial picture.

Smaller components of the enterprise — the vacation-package business, the drop-trailer enterprise and ancillary operations — are making money. And fuel consumption is down a bit.

But the big decision on which sailings to curtail in order to cope with the overall financial picture is coming soon from the government.

It will be the culmination of the service-reduction process that has been underway for months, aimed at carving several million dollars in costs out of the corporation's budget.

As a measure of how sensitive ferry decisions are, Corrigan noted the change to one of the smallest routes on the entire coast — converting the Denman Island run to a cable ferry — has faced considerable opposition.

But it will make for considerable savings, so he said the contract is proceeding.

It's only one of eight to 10 new ships that will be needed in the medium term, three of which will be tendered next year.

One of the bigger cost-saving moves under consideration is converting the fleet to natural gas. But Corrigan said the idea of converting current vessels has been put on hold until the technology matures.

Natural gas is still being considered for new ships.

MAILBOX: Your Letters

Concerned about flu shots

If a doctor said to me "we are going to inject this poison into your body, it's approved by the FDA to be safe, and you will have a 60 per cent chance that it will work, and by the way we don't know if there will be any side affects, but trust me it is OK," I think I would say a great big "no thank you."

To me the flu shot has experimental label attached, 60 per cent is not great odds, if we were playing poker we would throw in our cards.

Why was no data given as to the odds a health care worker getting the flu if they are wearing a surgical mask?

If a surgical mask is more effective, then wear surgical masks everyone. What's next?

Compulsory flu shots for every child going back to school after summer holidays?

The big pharmaceutical companies would love that.

Gary Augustine
Ness Lake

Senate scandal a sideshow

I have noted with some interest the increased ferocity of the senate scandal holding the forefront of Canadian news.

At the same time the fact that Harper is muzzling environmental scientists and gutting environmental protection laws might make page 16 – if at all.

So on one hand we have the possibility that there may be

a few people of questionable ethics misappropriating tens of thousands of dollars while on the other hand we have Canada being laid open to potential environmental damage in the billions, if not trillions of dollars.

Which issue really is more important? Dare we say diversion?

Jay Dumas
Prince George

City should control spending

As a beleaguered municipal taxpayer I resent the prevailing theme, much espoused by many Citizen editorials, that I have a choice between increased taxes or reduced services.

There is a third option: control expenditures.
Very sincerely,

Peter Bernier
Prince George

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