

# viewpoint

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## Growing pains

The population of the North Shore is up 4.7 per cent since 2016, according to the latest census. Not surprisingly, the bulk of that growth came along the Lonsdale corridor in the City of North Vancouver.

West Vancouver grew by 3.9 per cent, while the District of North Vancouver inched up 2.9 per cent, one of the slowest in Metro Vancouver, which is up 7.9 per cent.

The year's census numbers, fortuitously, come during a municipal election year. Our elections tend to be fought and lost mainly over the angst of whether we are growing too fast. There's a simplistic notion that more neighbours means more traffic and diminished quality of life.

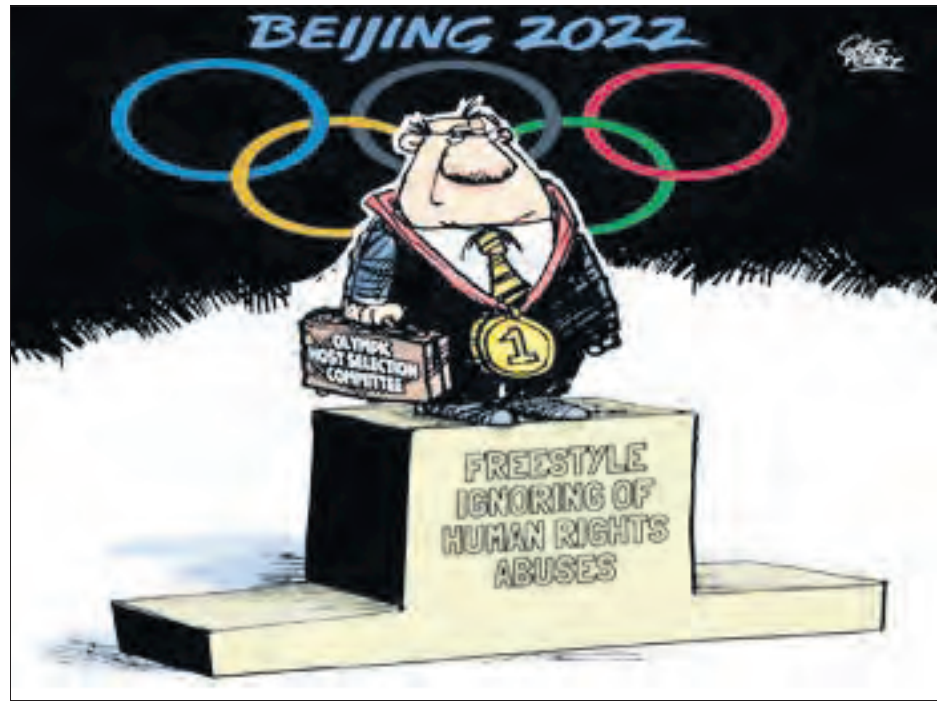
Squamish, meanwhile, has grown by 22 per cent, a number that should startle anyone who has been frustrated trying to cross Lions Gate Bridge at rush hour. The Fraser

Valley is also rapidly outpacing us. We cannot solve our traffic problem by making people live farther away.

Currently, North Shore mayors are going hat-in-hand to TransLink, arguing we should be next for billions of dollars in rapid transit infrastructure. It could be a tall order, as transit investments tend to go where the people are.

The federal government announced Monday plans to settle more than 400,000 immigrants per year for the next three years to help solve our skilled labour shortage.

It's time for our municipal leaders to abandon the quixotic and counterproductive notion that we can or should try to limit population growth. It would be a much greater service to both current and future residents to carefully plan for how we are going to sustainably live here, get around, and get along.



## We've got a honkin' big problem with the flag right now

It's a bit of an awkward time for the Canadian flag, isn't it?

Well, the modern flag has always been a little goofy, which somehow suited this country quite nicely. Many other countries opted for cool stuff on their flags, like stars, or eagles, or even a dang sickle – you guys like cutting grass, errrr?? – while most others opted for bold stripes of colour, or crosses of various shapes and sizes.

But not us. Nope. What did we put on our flag? A leaf. Yes, the softest part of the tree. But Canadians, for the most part, liked our little piece of flora. And the world liked it too, or at least they liked what it stood for. The world mostly still likes it, as far as I can tell. A Maple Leaf stitched on your backpack always told the locals that the traveller wearing that emblem would probably be polite and would maybe get a little drunk and would certainly say sorry after spilling their beer and would probably help clean up at the end of the night.

And this is usually the flag's time to shine – during the Olympic Games. Nothing brings out national fervour like watching four dudes going sledding together.

The other traditional time for the flag



Laugh All You Want  
Andy Prest

Andy Prest

to fly high is on Canada Day, and in particular it's new Canadians who are justifiably proud to wave the flag of the country that gave them opportunities they didn't have in their homeland.

Last Canada Day, however, was different for many people. The discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools across the country was a jarring reminder of the role the Canadian government played in co-ordinating a system created to indoctrinate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian ways of living and assimilate them into mainstream white Canadian society. For many Indigenous people, the Canadian flag was never a source of pride, but rather a reminder of the colonialism that created the country, and persists to this day.

But for many Canadians, the flag is still a positive symbol. At least, it was until a couple of weeks ago. But has something changed? Take this personal quiz: What do you think if you're driving now and a minivan

and a couple of pickups pull up behind you with Canadian flags flapping out the tops of all the windows?

I suppose this could be a "divisive" question. I suspect approximately 10-20 per cent might see that and say "Yes! Freedom!! Yes!!! I agree with you, flag men! Honk honk honk HONK HONK HONK!!!"

But the other 80 per cent of Canadians might see that in the rearview mirror and say, "Oh, there goes some wackadoos."

Then you might start asking yourself some questions. If you glance at those folks in the wrong way, will you get the finger? That would be weird, because you are just trying to take your kid to soccer. Or if you stop to grab some flowers at the local market, what will happen if they pull up beside you as you're putting on your mask? Will they start yelling "Wake up, Sheeple. Baaaa! Baaaa! You're poisoning your children. Baaaa!" Again, weird, because all you want is some begonias.

And of course, flying a flag doesn't guarantee that you're a big honker. It's quite likely that the guy in the flag car would be the first one to hop out and help you fix a flat tire.

But the thought that flag flying equals

unstable shouter is still there, because that is what we have seen across the country during the "Freedom Convoy."

We have long debated what it means to "be a Canadian," and the answer to that will be very different for people in different life situations. But none of the definitions of being a Canadian that I've ever heard includes parking your vehicle beside someone's home – you know, the place where they live – and then honking your horn for two straight weeks. And waving a Canadian flag while doing it? Anne of Green Gables must be rolling over in her grave.

Where do we go from here? First of all, stop honking at us please. As my driving instructor once told me, your vehicle's horn is not a weapon, it's a tool. Reminder: the horn should be a tool, not the driver.

Other than that, it would be nice if that dang COVID-19 would stop shutting down some people's lungs and other people's brains. And of course, the journey towards Truth and Reconciliation needs to continue, unabated.

Then one day, perhaps, we can all wave our flags together.

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