

LETTERS

# Smyth showed us another very human side of Horgan

*Re: Horgan happy to be premier despite Site C, family hardship, Michael Smyth column, Dec. 17*

I would like to commend columnist Michael Smyth for his very insightful and balanced article about Premier John Horgan.

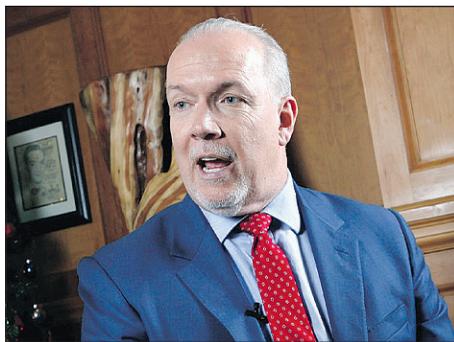
There is no doubt that the Site C decision was one of the most difficult decisions that the premier and his cabinet had to make so far.

Sometimes, we tend to forget that our politicians are human beings too. John Horgan's brother Pat's fight with his terminal illness must be stressful for him. At the same time, the premier was facing one of the toughest political decisions in his life. Despite all of that, he has been doing a marvellous job in serving the people of British Columbia.

I am very impressed with Horgan's upbeat and positive attitude as reported by Smyth: "I get up every morning like the Energizer bunny. I am whistling and humming and I'm just engaged."

Way to go John, and thanks Michael for showing a very different side of our premier.

**Balwant Sanghera, Richmond**



**John Horgan faced a tough political decision over the fate of the Site C dam.** — THE CANADIAN PRESS FILES

## Psychiatric nurses speak up

*Re: Speak up about abuse on psychiatric wards, Opinion, Dec. 17*

Dr. Diane McIntosh makes some very serious allegations in her opinion editorial describing the state of psychiatric care in B.C. hospitals. As president of a union that represents hundreds of registered psychiatric nurses working in the province, I take issue with her characterization of their record in providing mental health care.

Registered psychiatric nurses are an integral part of the mental health care team, and have specialized training to support some of the most vulnerable patients in our health system. HSA and other unions are constantly working to address chronic underfunding and resistance to making physical improvements to psychiatric care areas to better care for and protect patients and their caregivers.

Dr. McIntosh suggests the solution to witnessing poor care is to write a letter to the hospital.

As an instructor, I hope that is not the advice she is giving to future psychiatrists. She should know that under the Health Professions Act all regulated health professionals have a legal, professional, and ethical responsibility to report practitioners, including psychiatrists and registered psychiatric nurses, to their respective colleges, and, in the case of allegations of sexual assault, to the police.

**Val Avery, president,  
Health Sciences Association of B.C.**

## Zone fares for cabs needed

It seems to me there is a simple solution to

cab drivers who refuse to leave the Vancouver core — implement a zone fare that would at least cover their downtime. For example, if a cab ride from Vancouver to Coquitlam costs \$40, then add an additional \$15 to cover the 45 minutes to return to Vancouver.

Or go to a flat-rate system for any city outside of the taxi's usual area.

That would also apply to companies like Belair in Coquitlam who travel to Vancouver or the airport.

**Rick McGill, Port Coquitlam**

## Pellet gun case an outrage

*Re: Judge acquits man charged in string of Abbotsford pellet gun shootings, Dec. 17*

Judge Edna Ritchie has once again reinforced my belief that there is no justice for the victims of a crime here in Canada. It is absolutely absurd that persons driving around shooting people with a pellet gun have been acquitted of these charges.

When Harpreed Singh Vaid commits this crime again using a real gun and kills somebody, then Judge Ritchie should be charged as an accessory to murder.

**Brian Barnes, Steveston**

# Like Hillary Clinton, we must stand up and speak up

We came to hear Hillary Clinton's introspective views on politics, Russia and her presidential defeat. And we left with all of that and more. While much of the news coverage involved her thoughts on the Alabama Senate race, I walked away with an inspiring message for female empowerment.

Her optimistic, wide-ranging talk in Vancouver hit many of the most topical issues facing North Americans, but none was more important than her views on women. She has long been a champion for women's rights and her insights should be a lesson for us all as we move beyond the #MeToo conversation to true equality.

In Vancouver, as she has during her book tour, Clinton said the only way to combat sexism in politics is to elect more women. For me, the same thing holds true for business.

Like so many others, I want to change the status quo, which often



**Sybil Verch**

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sees women passed over for promotions or not even considered for jobs in the corporate suite. Today, just six per cent of Fortune 500 companies are led by women.

We can do better. Having more women at the corporate board table will not only help eliminate sexism and power imbalances but studies have shown it will also improve profits. A recent study found that companies with at least 30 per cent women in senior roles were six per

cent more profitable.

Unfortunately, progress is slow. Despite significant advances over the last half century, being a woman in the workplace remains a disadvantage. Women earn less, have less power and are often afraid to report abuse, discrimination or harassment.

Like many women, my past is littered with many #MeToo moments, ranging from abusive relationships to workplace discrimination.

Early in my career in the finance world, an older male colleague warned me not to become a financial adviser: "You're young, you're female and you're pretty. People just won't take you seriously," he said.

I was furious. But I used my anger as fuel to propel me to new levels of success.

I wish the discrimination had stopped there. But, as so many others can attest, the outrageous abuses and subtle biases are almost everywhere.

After each indiscretion or inappropriate comment, I became stronger — and I'm hoping the same for others. I climbed the corporate ladder and broke through the glass ceiling, becoming a senior executive at North America's largest independent brokerage firm.

Now, I am hoping we can use these retrospective stories to fuel a new narrative — based on true equality.

That's what my book, *The Female Edge*, is about — giving women a roadmap to a place where they have the confidence to stand up, and step up, to greater challenges.

As women, we need to turn obstacles into opportunities. We need to step out of our comfort zones to get ahead. And we need to push our limits to achieve more.

Shaming, harassing and belittling have no place in our society.

It's not good enough to watch as Canada's Environment Minister is denigrated with a demeaning moniker like "Climate Barbie." We — both

women and men — must speak up and be intolerant of this kind of conduct.

Hillary Clinton is one who stands up and speaks up. And she doesn't want women to be dissuaded by her electoral loss — she is hoping more women will be inspired by it. As she says, she doesn't want anyone to give up because it is hard.

Inspiring words. But it goes well beyond the world of politics. It's about breaking down barriers, stamping out harassment and inspiring a new generation of leaders who believe in true equality.

TIME Magazine calls it a "revolution of refusal" — refusing to stay quiet, refusing to accept the status quo, refusing to stop.

A social movement is upon us. We have momentum. To achieve true equality, we must continue to move forward.

*Sybil Verch is a Victoria-based financial expert, motivational speaker and author of *The Female Edge*.*