

*Your full name, please?*

Nancy Ann - with no 'e' - MacLarty

*Birth Date and place?* August

25, 1936 in Ottawa.

*Your parent's names?*

My mother's maiden name, Gertrude Ruth Atkinson.

My father's name was John Lamb, which was the family name, MacLarty.

*And your parents were born?*

In Ottawa.

*Your siblings?*

I had one brother who was seven years older than I, and died in 1982.

*Robert?*

No, Robert-even though to all intents and purposes, he was my brother-Robert was . . . he wasn't really even adopted. He came when he was nine months old from Children's Aid and was born in 1946, and because at that time the Children's Aid, if they couldn't pass certain mental tests by the time they were two, they were unadoptable. So he just stayed with us. But then he came to live with me in 1972, I guess.

*And your older brother's first name?*

Harry. John Henry Leslie MacLarty.

*Your parent's occupations?*

Well, my mother was a housewife, and my father worked for almost fifty years at Metropolitan Life.

*Insurance?*

Yes, in the claims department. He's been dead for almost thirty years.

*As a child, the schools you attended?*

Mutchmore in Ottawa. That was part of elementary school.

Hopewell, that was also elementary school.

*Both in Ottawa?*

Yes.

Then high school was Glebe Collegiate.

*What year did you graduate?*

1952.

*Post secondary?*

No.

*Subjects you excelled in?* Oh, I don't know. English. Not math. Social Studies. Those sorts of subjects. Long time ago.

*What subjects did you hate?* Math.

*What were your responsibilities at home as a child and young adult?*

I left home when I was fifteen.

*How did that happen?*

Well, my mother didn't like this boy that I liked, and I was working as well. Started early back in those days. And so she told me if I went out with him, not to come home. So I went out with him, I came home and my suitcases were outside the door.

*So what were you working at then?*

I think I was working at Dustbane Canada. They were a company that did industrial cleaning supplies. I was the assistant payroll clerk at age 15. But you see, I was very young going into high school. I was just 11. Because I took 3 & 4 in one year and 7 & 8 in one year, and it was too young, really to go into high school-into grade 9. That was grade 9.

Do you want a list of the jobs that I've had?

*How about the highlights?*

I was a dental assistant. Then I worked at the Met Life for a while.

*With your Dad?*

Well, he worked for Metropolitan Life, but I wasn't working with him. I don't know, I think I was in - I wasn't there very long - in the claims department, or something like that. Group claims, I think it was.

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Then, I worked for the Government of Canada. I guess I was a secretary in the Central Pay Office. And then went with the Government of Canada up to the arctic to Frobisher Bay where I managed the office in an Eskimo hospital.

*How long were you there?*

I was there a year. That was long enough.

*What was it like?*

Looked like the moon up there. No trees. Rocks. Ice. However, there were . . . SAC [Strategic Air Command] was up there. The US Air Force. There were 13 women and 1,400 men, so it

wasn't all bad!

When I came back, I worked for a real estate appraiser as his assistant. Then I went to CBC.

*How did you start at CBC?*  
1963.

*What did you start as?*

I started as a secretary, I guess. Within three months then I got into the production end as, what they called then, a script assistant.

*Because you were so good with English?*

No. A script assistant is really . . . you're assistant to the producer. Or associate director as they call them now. They have all different titles for them now.

*So you were doing higher level secretarial work?*

Well, you're doing everything. You're ordering props and facilities and picking music and doing everything.

*How long did you stay as a script assistant?*

Until '68. Then I was going to get married and went to England for a very short period of time and came back and there was . . . . CBC had locked down. (That was in Toronto, by the way.) So I came out to British Columbia in '68 and didn't have a job or anything. But, being a good talker, and BS-er too, I went to . . . CBC, as I say, was closed down as far as jobs were concerned back then, so I went around to all of the radio stations. I had never worked in radio, but I went around to all the radio stations and told them how wonderful I'd be for them, and got a job at CFUN as the researcher and producer of an open line show called *Madam X*. And Madam X is my best friend, still. She's a lawyer.

*Is it confidential what her name is?* Allison Burnet.

*How long did you work at that?*

Well, we got thrown off the air for doing a show on women's orgasms. (Laughs) So we were a little ahead of our time. Today they wouldn't do anything about it.

So, then I went up to Kelowna to CKOV and CJOV, the AM and FM station, as the copy chief. That is writing all of their advertising advertising copy and so on. I stayed there for a year. Wanted to get back to Vancouver. And got a job at CKWX as copy chief.

But I really wanted to get back to CBC and heard there was an opening in Ottawa, and of course I'm from Ottawa. So I applied and I got the job. So in 1971, I guess, I went back to Ottawa to CBC as a script assistant for about a year, and then I became a producer in television.

*How long were you a producer for television for CBC in Ottawa?*

From '73 to '85.

*What are some of the shows that you produced?*

Wrote, produced and directed.

A show called *Platform*, a one-hour show that went from all of the time that I was there.

A consumer show called *Straight Goods*, which went for four years.

A women's show called *Lady is a Four Letter Word*, which went for two years.

All of these were all at the same time. I was busier than a one-armed paper-hanger.

And then I did a film documentary series called *Changes* which was on social issues and medical issues and so on, and that went for four years.

And then I got an ulcer, of course. Then I had a heart attack. And they kept saying, no, it's your ulcer. I said, No. So I went for five days with these pains and everything, and nobody would listen to me. I went to three different hospitals. Finally, I walked in and I said, "I'm not leaving the Emergency Ward until you do something!" So they took blood and found dead heart cells in my blood and rushed me into the cardiac intensive care.

To show you what the CBC was like then, they kept trying to get a-hold of me while I was in there and they wouldn't put them through, of course. Then when I came home from the hospital eight days later, I came in and our program director and our unit manager, who takes care of the money, were sitting in my living room waiting for me! Because, I was starting a new, live, 5-day-a-week show in September, and this was June.

So... actually when I saw them I started crying. They had no heart.

Anyway, I did that for a year and I had a lot of angina because of all of this . . . I hadn't had a proper heart attack, I had what they call heart spasms, and it had damaged my heart muscle and left me with an aneurysm on my heart. So the cardiologist finally said, "Well, I'm going to send you to a surgeon and there's a 70% chance that if we excise the aneurysm you won't have the angina any more." Because I was eating nitroglycerins in the control room. So I had open heart surgery in 1983, and they couldn't excise the aneurysm for some reason, I don't know why. So while they had me open they did a single bypass. It's a huge insult to the body, you know.

So I went back to work after four months, I guess, and I was still having the angina and so on. My cardiologist said he would put me on long term disability if I could get away from the CBC.

I knew about Sechelt, because Allison, my friend, had a summer place on Savary Island and I used to go up there. And Sechelt has a hospital, and the price was right. So I packed up Bobby and myself, sold the house and came out here first of all and looked around at houses. Found this one, which was perfect for Bob because downstairs there are two more bedrooms, a big living room, a bathroom and so on. And it had its own entrance, so it was perfect for him.

So I was out here for three days looking at houses and put down a non-refundable \$5,000 deposit on this house, and mine was up for sale, and luckily, it sold.

I moved in this house on June 18, 1985. So it's almost 21 years.

*I'm going to backtrack just a little. Your time with the CBC, that was high intensity. Did you ever feel out of your depth?*

No.

*You obviously trained yourself. You must have been very observant.*

Yes.

*Did you have any strategies?*

No. Well, being a script assistant helped a lot because you are working hand-in-glove with the producer/director, and in fact, sometimes they wouldn't show up and you'd have to do the show. So it's great learning ground. They don't have that anymore, but it was a great learning ground.

When I was in Toronto I worked on shows like *Juliette*, and *Country Hoedown*, and *Wayne & Shuster*. All of those.

*Other than the high intensity of it, did you enjoy it?*

Oh, I loved it! I would have paid them sometimes to have been there.

*Because of the excitement, or the work?*

I just loved it. It was something different all the time. The hours were crazy, but I never did like 9 to 5 very much.

*When you were in school, what was your greatest success?*

Oh, I don't know. I won some spelling contests. I won an award from the post office for writing a poem-this was some sort of a thing for kids all across Canada-for writing a poem about the postal service. And the Postmaster General presented me with this plaque and so on. I have no idea where it is now.

*Did you ever have any dreams of what you would do, or did every thing just happen?*

Well, I knew I didn't want to be ordinary. I *did* want to get into television. And I was good at writing and art and so on.

*And your lack of post secondary education, was that ever intimidating to you?* I lied. (Laughs)  
And in fact, when I went back after being in BC and had to apply again, I had to get in touch with one of my friends who was in Human Resources to send me my old application form so I could copy down what I had put on it! Because I figured by the time-if they checked-by the time they checked I'd be doing such a good job that they wouldn't want to get rid of me. I guess I had too much confidence.

*What do you think gave you that confidence?*  
Probably being out on my own when I was 15.

*Was there anyone who inspired you as a young adult?* I think I inspired myself, to tell you the truth.

*Were you a great reader?*  
Yes. Always a great reader, and learned to read when I was really young. I'm still a great reader. I go through three or four books a week.

*And what were your favourites?*  
My favourite when I was a little girl, I think, was *The Secret Garden*. I loved that book. But I read everything. I was very catholic in my tastes.

*Adult books as a young girl?*  
I mean, I wasn't a Bobsey Twin person. I read everything.

*What do you think started your reading? Were your parents great readers ?*  
No, they weren't. My father only went to grade 4. He was in the first world war when he was 15. He was over in France.

*You seemed to carry that tradition on!*  
Yes. Fifteen. Magic number.

*So you never were married?*  
No. And no kids. Although Bobby was much like my son.

*How much older than him were you?*  
I was 9 years older than he.

*How did you come to look after him?*  
Oh, that's a long story. My mother was overprotecting him. She didn't allow him to go on a bus by himself, or to do anything on his own. I knew that at some point, then, I was going to be the one who was responsible. So I kidnapped him. I literally kidnapped him. I made a little apartment for him downstairs in my house and he just blossomed.

He was a wonderful kid. Boy. Man. And he certainly learned a lot about life living with me. He was a good dancer-I taught him how to dance. I taught him how to swim. Then he won all this

stuff in the Special Olympics in swimming. He was in the Ontario Special Olympics and the Canadian Special Olympics.

In fact, I did a little time capsule thing that I buried with his ashes back in Ottawa and one of the things I put in there was one of his gold medals.

*What a good idea.*

I even put in the wishbone from the turkey at Christmas. And wrote a little thing about him, and put it in there-who this was, and so on. Put in some of his clippings.

*When you came to Sechelt, what sort of organizations did you belong to?*

Oh, the Arts Centre. What really got me involved in Sechelt was what is now a community moorage in front of us. Do you remember Henry Hall?

*Yes.*

A name that sticks out in history. Anyway, he had that as a herring ponding operation, and it was against the zoning, it was against the terms of the lease, and Sechelt wouldn't do anything about it. And they had three houseboats down there with people living on them and flushing into the chuck. And the noise. It was terrible.

So that was how I got involved and started going to council meetings. Finally I got the media involved. I got the ombudsman involved. I started this community association, SHORA. And it just sort of went from there. And then I started writing the column in the Coast News. That was when John Burnside was there.

*What was the column about?*

It was called Coastlines and it was a lot of local politics. If there wasn't anything juicy-I went to more council meetings than the councillors did-I'd write a funny column.

Then I stopped writing it when I ran as alderman and failed. But I was not that far behind. Anyway, I didn't get in the first time so I went back to writing my column again. At that time, remember, it was every two years, the election. So then I tried again and won, much to some people's dismay, including the Shanks. Because Malcolm Shanks said, going down and looking at this place down here, "Well, one man's trash is another man's treasure!" That dip!

So I was on council for a couple of years, and then off and went back to writing my column. It was the *Coast Independent* then, I guess. And when the next election came up, and they were having them every three years then, I ran for mayor. (Laughs) I have no idea why I did that, but I did!

You know who was against me, I think, was David Wells, who died just a couple of weeks ago, actually. Stan Dixon and Roger Lagasse. And I got twice as many votes as David did, and Stan was way down there, and I got 1,400 and something and David got 500 and something.

*So you became the mayor.*

Yes. She who once was worshiped.

*-So your choice to get into local politics was because of the incident down here?* Yes. There were just so many things that they weren't listening to the people about.

*And you were able to alleviate that situation?*

Yes, the ombudsman got him out of there.

*How long did that take?*

From '85 to '87. I was like a dog with a bone. I wouldn't give up.

*What organization was your greatest supporter for your mayoral race?* I don't know. I mean, I didn't have any organization. People knew me from my column. The only advertising I did was I put an ad in the *Personals* saying, "Single female wants lasting relationship with the residents of the District of Sechelt." (Laughs) You know, good sense of humour. Honest. Also I had . . . what I wanted to do I had it in point form on these sheets and I went door to door. You haven't lived until you've gone door to door in Tuwanek with these big dogs and everything.

*So you had a list of what you wanted to accomplish.*

Yes. And as I accomplished them . . . or as the council accomplished them, most of them got crossed off.

*What kind of things were on that list?*

Well, one thing was, I was really strong on bylaw enforcement and that we improve our bylaws. And . . . I'm trying to think now-it was a while ago. '89 I guess. I have a copy around. I'll try to find it for you.

Council meetings. I wanted council meetings to be more open, less in-camera meetings and so on. And you know, the best time I had as mayor-because believe me, it's no fun-was interacting with people. People would phone me up and start screaming at me about something and by the time we said good-bye they'd be laughing.

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Then I had the mayors hotline.

*I was going to ask you how effective was that?*

Well, the people liked it, because they could phone at any hour of the day or night. I never had an unlisted phone number, but they could phone the mayor's hotline and leave a message on there and yell at me and so on and so forth, and I made sure that whatever the problem was, I'd look into it and as much as possible, take care of it and get back to the people.

I wanted to have a newsletter that went out at least four times a year to the taxpayers, but no. But I started the Municipal Memo. Which is quite small now, compared to what I used to put in.

But I guess because I came from communications, I felt that communication was really important.

That mayor's hotline had to get an answering machine. It was \$128, and Michael Shanks, of course, put up a great stink about the thing and I ended up paying for it myself. Of course, he was upset with me because I'd fired his brother. With cause. But we won't talk about that.

*So it would seem that Michael Shanks was your greatest opponent?*

Well, he wrote to CBC and Great West Life. He and David Wells, actually wrote to CBC. And because I had a lot of friends at CBC, they sent me a copy of the letter. Otherwise I would never have known who sent it. Michael denied sending it, but there was his signature. But he didn't say that he was councillor, just an interested citizen. So they stopped my long term disability pension and I had to go in for all these tests and everything that Great West Life put me through at St. Paul's, and I guess I passed because they reinstated my pension. But it was a nasty thing to do.

And also, I didn't take any money while I was mayor, or councillor, and I started the Mayor's Scholarship, which they still can't get right. I think it's the largest scholarship they've got. It's \$2500.

*What are the details of it?*

Well, the criteria was the student receiving it must be wanting to continue their education in an area that would be compatible with municipal government, either social planning, municipal law, human relations-whatever. And they get it wrong every year.

*How so?*

Well, they give it out to people who are taking a year off, then they don't know what they're going to do and so on and so forth. So I've had some great fights with the school board, and they seem to have lost. . . I mean there's a legal trust that was set up between the school board and the District of Sechelt. It was \$51,000 and was gaining interest.

That was about seven years of work for the municipality, where I brought in my own typewriter, because I was no good at dictating. I couldn't think without a typewriter. And also it saved time, because a girl didn't have to sit in front of me and take dictation. But they wouldn't get me a typewriter, so I had to bring in my own typewriter. I think I got them to buy me a carbon ribbon once. And I had to buy my own FAX machine, and my own answering machine. Now, of course, they all have computers and FAX machines and everything. E-mail.

I found I got more done-I'm not a morning person-I got more done if I'd go in about 11 o'clock, unless there was a meeting, and quite often it was 8 or 9 or 10 o'clock at night that I'd leave. That was in the old building. I got moved-I was in three different offices for the three years that I was there.

*Doesn't the mayor get to choose those things?*

No, not then. And also, I'm a woman.

*That was one of my questions: what difficulties did you encounter as a woman mayor?*

Well, there's the Old Boy's Network! At that point in time they had all these old . . . poops! You know. I really think women are more nurturing and better with people in many cases. Then there was the big thing with Doug Reid.

*What was that?*

Actually, I have a cartoon. He ended up resigning as councillor. This is from the *Coast News*, I think. Doug in his highchair, right? And me as the mother. (Laughs)

*Reading cartoon: It was apparent from the outset that Dougie 's days were numbered.*

We just locked heads all the time.

*What were your biggest confrontations about?*

Oh, I don't know. I mean, he thought he could just go do things on his own without getting council approval. Also, he and a lot of them thought that they could order staff around, public works staff and so on. And they can't. Only the mayor can do that, or their department head. So I had to send a few memos. His background had been in personnel and he thought he could run the personnel.

That was another thing-we had no job descriptions. There was no union then. I was blamed for being responsible for them being unionized, for bringing the union in, by Michael Shanks again. But the Regional District was unionized, Gibsons was unionized . . . so that way they got their job descriptions and so on. I mean, I've never been that strong on unions, although I had to belong to a lot of them when I was at CBC.

*So you felt that you were able to achieve most of your goals?*

Yes, I think so. Most of them.

And then I didn't run again after that. I'd had enough. The last six months I had the days "x-ed" off. So many more days. Then there was the big thing about smoking in the office (laughs), where I used to sit freezing to death with the windows open, my door closed and locked, breaking the bylaw. But I figured, you know, I'm volunteering.

*What would you say was your greatest achievement as mayor?*

Well, downtown revitalization. If you ever look at the plaque which is hidden under bushes and everything else at the Bank of Montreal on that cement thing -I must get at them to get some brass cleaner and clean that bloody plaque! The revitalization on Cowrie Street when we took out all the poles and stuff like that. Of course, that was started before me so I don't deserve all the credit on that.

The OCP. [Official Community Plan] All of the new bylaws. Well, not all of them. We didn't even have a book of policies. Policies would be about one line about something, and that was their policy.

So those were some of the things.

*Did you find that your work as CBC was helpful?*

I certainly found it was helpful as far as communicating with people. Going to a council meeting was almost like going into the control room. Because you have your agenda, and in the control room you'd have your lineup and so on. I used to doodle a lot! And I hated meetings that didn't get anything done. You know those meetings that go on and on and on, and at the end nothing has happened. I used to get so upset.

The environment. The gravel pit -I started the thing where people could call and complain about the gravel pit, and we'd keep track of all the calls and send them over to Construction Aggregates. The gravel people didn't like me very much. I mean, it's ruined Sechelt.

*Do you get a lot of noise from it over here?*

Yes. Especially when the crusher is going and the conveyor is going, and so on. It depends a lot, too, on the weather. And of course they slash burn up there all the time, then it just sinks down. And here I am smoking. But at least I'm doing it in my own house.

*Were you the one responsible for them putting the [noise] buffers in?*

Well, I don't think I was responsible, but certainly we had town hall meetings and so on, and the band councillor . . . I remember the band councillor getting up there and saying, "That noise that you hear is money jingling in our pockets."

*What was your response?*

Well, the Band didn't like me very well. Sitting at the Regional District and calling me a 'European'. "You Europeans!" I said, "No. I'm a Canadian. Just like you are Canadian. You may be an aboriginal Canadian, but you are a Canadian." That didn't go over very well.

Another thing, too, is that they were allowing the . . . down at our dock - oh, that's another thing I got going was I got the Harbour Authority going. There were about three native fishing boats that docked down there and they were using electricity and water and so on and so forth, and they never paid their moorage, and nobody said anything. And I said, there's nothing special about them. They're people. But for some reason other they said, "Oh, you better not do that." And one of them was on the band council too. So I had no problems writing a letter.

*Who did you write to?* [

I wrote to, I guess it was Gary Feschuck.

*And told them they 'd have to start paying?*

Yeah. They were so much in arrears. But that was during the end of my term. and I don't know if they just wrote it off as a bad debt or whether they're allowing them-you know, it's not right.

Oh and Block 7. Ohhhh! Don't get me started on Block 7. It's just terrible what they've done down there. That's our most highly assessed land. The taxes for Block 7 could be paying for a swimming pool.

*What would you like to have seen go in there?*

Well, we've had so many plans for Block 7, which have cost us a lot of money, and they've all been just thrown out the window.

I'd like to have seen banks and maybe some three-story condos, and more stores. I mean, it's downtown. Look at Starbuck's and the Toronto Dominion Bank now are in the gravel pit. We get nothing out of that.

We get nothing from the municipal hall, and the library. I'm glad the library is there. I was a big proponent of the library going on there. But not the municipal hall. I thought the municipal hall should go over on the land that we own that was across the road from where the Regional District was. By the Royal Terraces. That blank land. And in fact, I paid Kevin Ryan, who is an architect, to draw up a plan showing that it was feasible to have our municipal hall there. And of course the staff were all for it because they could have had a nice roof-garden cafeteria or something up there. Coffee Shop.

*What was the objection to it?*

They just didn't want it there. They wanted it on Block 7. At that time the mayor was Earl Basse. When I came out, he came in. He was a forensic accountant. So they had the referendum as I was going out, but I had written all the copy about the library and the background on the library. There was that big pullout thing. I did all that stuff. Saved them a lot of money, too.

You know a good thing that happened was Canada's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was the first time, I think, that they'd ever really had a proper Canada Day celebration. Down at Hackett Park. I wrote to all of the provinces and got little flags from all the different provinces. We had a table for each province that you could go if you were from Newfoundland or Nova Scotia, or whatever, and get that plus your Canada flag. And had entertainment for the kids. We even had the pipes and it was sort of an all-day affair. The only one I couldn't get was Saskatchewan. They said they couldn't afford to send us these little paper flags. So I got in touch with Lorne Nystrom who I'd known, because his wife Gail

worked at CBC. So I got in touch with Lorne Nystrom and he sent us the flags. There's always a way around something, you know?

*What would you say was your greatest disappointment as a mayor?*

The council? (Laughs)

That we didn't get enough done. That the municipal hall ended up—not under my watch, but the referendum - ended up on Block 7.

That we never got a newsletter going. I was going to write it for them and everything, but no, they couldn't afford to print it.

It was more after. They did away with the mayor's hotline. A lot of the stuff that was good and took a lot of the weight off staff.

*Were you the only -woman on council at the time?*

Joyce was on and Peggy Wagner. I don't know where Peggy is now.

*Did you get any support. . .*

Especially from Joyce. When I first met Joyce, she always had hats on, a lady. Then she passed me this note at one of the first council meetings, "Do you want to go for a beer afterward?" I nearly fell over! So we went to Gilligan's.

Believe me, you needed a drink after some of those council meetings. I think I started the question periods in council.

Oh, and one thing that really upset me was that. . . remember how Gibsons always had their meetings on cable? I wanted Sechelt's to be on cable as well, especially with the new municipal hall going up. They could have wired it properly, but no. And I guess Gibsons isn't any more, either.

*When you spoke of the Old Boys Club. How did that affect your position as mayor?*

There was a lot of block voting. And also a lot of, "There, there, dear," type of thing.

*Patronizing?*

Yeah. Very patronizing. It was more of a feeling . . . You knew that they were . . . and they'd get together with some things and come in with them all ready to go. But we had people like Len Herder, Doug Reid, and Bob Wilson . . . Len Herder just died last week.

David Wells, he was a retired technician from CBC Toronto.

*Were there any perks as mayor of Sechelt? You obviously didn 't get any salary.*

No. In fact, you had to go to all of these different things, because you had to go to them. There was no place to park. So no, there weren't any perks.

*Were you relieved when it was over and there were no regrets?*

Oh, I had a few regrets. I grumbled and so on. Joyce keeps going to the meetings, but I just get so stressed out at those meetings now that I don't go. I try to put it out of my mind. I'm sorry I can't write my column any more. The *Coast Reporter* doesn't want me. I mean, I was getting \$25 a column. Big deal. But there was some expense involved in it, I'd make long distance phone calls and so on and so forth, so really I didn't make anything. But the *Reporter* said, Oh fine, yes, but we won't pay you. So I told them that it was their loss. I still have people stopping in the grocery store or something and say how they miss the column, they knew what was going on. Every once in a while I'll write a letter to the editor, but they screw it up so much, they edit them so much ...

*So your regrets were in terms of not being able to do anything anymore as opposed to . . .*

Yeah, I guess so.

But you know, I'm much better living a stress-free life and I'll live longer for it, I hope.

*How would you sum up Sechelt politics?*

What do they call it in baseball? Minor league? They're too political first of all. And they don't listen to their constituents. And they pay far too much attention to the business community. They're bush league.

There's two people on council now that are worth while. One is Warren Allen and the other is Keith Thirkell. And we need younger people on council too.

I mean afterwards, after I was mayor, I went on the Area Planning Commission and stuff like that. But I just sort of dropped it at the end of those terms.

*Do you think that politics today, they're not in touch with the ordinary citizens?*

No, they're not. I don't know what they're thinking about, but my taxes are going to go up more than \$400 this year because of recreation. First of all, they planned for a Mercedes Benz swimming pool when they should have been planning for a Chevy and as we grew, have room for expansion to put in things like slides and all of this stuff. And they should have put it up by the Arena. That land was given to us by the crown for recreational purposes and can't be used for anything else. They say it's too far for people to come. Well, for who to come?

I started the Coast Housing Society after I got out. (Sounds like I was in the Pen or something!)

Because we needed affordable housing in Sechelt. So I started the Coast Housing Society and got 21 units of nonprofit housing built on Trail Avenue at the corner of Reef. I started this when I was mayor. I shouldn't have, but I removed myself from any meetings that had to do with it. But it helped in gaining access to people, saying it was the mayor. But you know, the person who was the deputy minister in charge of housing or something like that, had worked in Ottawa at Ottawa City Hall, and the mayor at the time was Marion Dewer. She was good friends with Marion Dewer. I knew Marion Dewer, but I didn't know her. So I phoned her a couple of times and couldn't get through. So the last time I phoned I said it was Marion Dewar calling and she took the phone right away! I said, "No, it's not Marion Dewar. Calm yourself." But at least I got through to her.

She thought-she said, "Oh well, there's all kinds of affordable housing on the Sunshine Coast." I said, "Where?"

She said, "Squamish."

I said, "Do you know where the Sunshine Coast is? You're a deputy minister. Surely you must know where the Sunshine Coast is?" You know? These people!

But anyway, it was offered to Sechelt at no charge to them that the buildings, the 21 units and the land, would go to Sechelt and they didn't have to pay anything after sixty years and they turned it down.

*Why?*

Right. Why? They thought there was some catch or something.

*So did they put them in? Oh yeah.*

*How did they finance it?*

It was Canada Mortgage and Housing and the B.C. Government. Under the Housing Act. But believe me, it took three years to get them built. A year and a half before anyone would listen to me. We had a board of directors. I started the society and we had a board of directors with people like Nancy Baker and Rosina Giles, but they were just on it because I said I needed a signature here. So it was really just on paper. But we got born as a nonprofit society and so on. But we pay our taxes to Sechelt. Whereas they'll give the Rod & Gun Club tax exemption.

It's things like that that get me upset.

*How does the society run? Do people apply to live in those houses? Is it a rental?*

Yes, it's very government. There's criteria and points and so on and so forth. It depends on what their living conditions are now, what their salary is. They pay one-third of their gross income as rent. We have a lot of single moms in there with two and three kids, sometimes four and five kids, who are working at minimum wage jobs: housekeepers at motels; waitresses.

Another thing that made me mad. CMHC built nonprofit housing for the Sechelt Indian Band.

We have to take aboriginal Canadians, but they don't have to take us. It's stuff like that that really upsets me. I think we should be on a level playing field. It's all our tax dollars which they don't pay very much of.

And I'm not a bigot! I just think certain things aren't fair.

*Are you still on that society?*

No. Once it got built and up and running for two years, I retired. I got Joan O'Brian, who had retired from Social Services, and I talked her into being president.

But it's full with big long waiting lists of people to get in there.

*It must be very satisfying.*

It was! Probably one of the most satisfying things I ever did. That and getting most of the community associations together and going.

Also I got a group home built for mentally handicapped. It was the first independent living place in BC. It's right across from Shornecliff. A lovely house. It's sort of Japanese looking. But now they've just turned it into a plain, ordinary group home. It was supposed to be for people who could go there and live up to 18 months and learn how to cook, how to market to buy groceries and budget with help. So they could move on to sharing with somebody in an apartment or something. But now they just use it as a group home with 24-hour supervision.

*And all of this you've done on your own time as a volunteer?*

I did a lot of stuff for the Festival, too. I used to host the free lunch hour thing which was sort of like the Phil Donahue show, where I'd be running around with the microphone.

I really like starting new things and accomplishing the goals. Not so much any more.

My next big goal is to stop smoking by August.

*That takes courage.*

Well, I've tried a few times and I even took those pills, but I had a side effect to them. I thought I had Parkinson's. I couldn't even hold a cup of coffee. Which is apparently a side affect. But I've been smoking since I was 15. A lot happened when I was 15!

I roll my own on a V-master. It rolls five at a time. I've done that for 35 years.

*What would you say is Sechelt 's greatest asset?*

I guess Sechelt Inlet. One of the things that I wanted them to do-I watch these big boats from the States coming down here in the summer time, and there was nothing down there at the dock. Even put up a sign that says "You are here and there's these different restaurants and businesses

and so on and so forth." No. A direct line to the travel information thing. You couldn't even get gas down there.

Sechelt inlet is beautiful. Fjords. I think it has a lot more going for it, certainly now, than the Trail Bay waterfront. Davis Bay is very nice, but it's got all these businesses and apartments and so on. I think what they've done with the condos going across is terrible.

And I mourn the Wakefield Inn going. When I'd be a sort of escort to some of the people that would come to the festival, and a lot of them were CBC people that I'd known, Eric Mailing and people like that, and I always took them for lunch at the Wakefield.

The places that they're selling there are 75% sold. Whereas that place on the Tong property on Trail Bay is just sitting there. Of course because of the gravel loader. When they're loading that gravel that boat is running its generators 24/7. What a mess!

The people from Sayward got in touch with me. Construction Aggregates Lehigh went in there. So I just did a guest editorial for the *Sayward*, whatever it is.

*What would you say is the greatest challenge that Sechelt faces?*

Well. I was at Savary about a week ago and I was talking to some people in Powell River. A lot of people are moving up to the Powell River area because taxes are too high, and the mines. So I think the biggest challenge they have right now is this. I mean, they can't do anything about that thing that's there now, and they can't really do anything about this Dolomite mine either, because it is outside the boundaries. But their biggest challenge is to at least *try* to do something. To stand up and be counted. And also to think. . . I mean the way the taxes are going now, people can't afford to live here anymore. They say, "Oh well, your property value has gone up." But everything is relative. I'm paying for sewer, and I'm not on sewer. So I don't know. I think they've got to think smaller as far as amenities are concerned and use their brains as far as Sechelt Inlet is concerned and understand the potential that it has for eco-tourism.

This could really be a great place. But look at our entrance to Sechelt right now!

*Billboards.*

That's on band land. Look at the Shopper's Drugmart sign. That was allowed, and it's against the bylaw. We have a bylaw regarding the size of signs. But they got special dispensation. See that's what I mean about business.

And that bloody Seaside Centre.

*If you had advice for someone entering local politics, what would it be? Besides staying away!*

I guess first of all remember you can't do anything by yourself. You have to work with all of the

people on council. You are just one vote. Doesn't even matter if you're the mayor. So you can't say, "I'll do this and I'll do that." You have to say, "I'll try." And you have to be honest and forthright and keep your promises, and have a very thick skin. And have more give and take with the community. Find out what the community-what the taxpayers-want.

I mean, half the time the people don't really even vote in the referendums, and then they say, "Oh what's this we got in our tax notice now?"

You can't have just one thing that you want to accomplish. You can't be just a one-issue person. You have to look at the whole.

*Life for you since you left politics . . . you kept going?*

Yes. It's only in the past maybe three years or so that I haven't been that involved in getting something done. Although I'm trying to fight this bloody PPA Mine and so on.

That was an interesting article in the newspaper about Stan Dixon. That was another thing that used to make me mad. Because they are a municipality. Their meetings-not their band council meetings, but their Sechelt Indian Band Municipality meetings are supposed to be open, like ours are and reporters are supposed to be able to go. But they won't let you in.

Everybody tiptoes around the natives.

*Have you ever regretted your decision to come to the Sunshine Coast?*

No. I'm glad I live here. Compared to Ottawa.

But I worry-for instance, it's just across here at the old Rivtow gravel pit that they are going to do this Silverback thing. I have no doubt that they are going to sell the gravel that is still in there to Construction Aggregates and that's all going to be mined out. Then Sechelt is going to allow them to open burn. And only two people have voted against them and that's Warren Allen and Keith Thirkell.

I used to go to all the public hearings on the rezoning. I feel that you should create zones that suit the area. Not just say, "Okay, because you want to do this, we'll make you 12. But 12 also allows fish processing, aquaculture, all kinds of stuff. And what they don't understand is that they are not rezoning the people, it's the land, so the people can then flip the property to be used for whatever they want.

You know that messy truck place. They rezoned that to this thing that allows all of these different things, including the truck stuff. I yelled at them, but it didn't do any good.

It's important too, that they get people on staff who aren't on their way out. Who aren't coming here for five years before they retire or something like that. And somebody who will stand up to council.

What we need, especially in the area of planning, are planners who have got insight and can look forward and know that what they are doing now has this huge impact on what Sechelt is.

We all have to find out what we want to be when we grow up. They keep changing their minds on what they want to be when they grow up.

If I were mayor now, I would be, whether council came with me or not, picketing at PPA. And those poor people at Wood Bay! It was the late 80s and the big fight about the aquaculture farms towed in front of their houses.

You know who was good in the Regional District, was Gordon Wilson. Gordon Wilson stood up.

*When you were in CBC or in your career, did you win awards?*

I was nominated for an ANIK with one of my documentaries. I had a \$3,000 budget per show for these film documentaries and I was up against Chagall, *The Colours of Love* which had a \$600,000+ budget, and I didn't win. But I was nominated.

A lot of politics in CBC now.

It's hard to say, but it was lucky that I had a heart attack. It was at that point that all the suits were coming in and the Harvard MBA's. People are so dispirited now at the CBC. They keep cutting their budget and cutting their budget at a time when they need them more than ever.

It used to make me so mad. We always had to be at the opening of parliament, we always had to be at this, that and the other thing -- Canada Day. It was always on overtime. And CTV would take feeds from us for free. But they were mandated to do that.

*What would you like Sechelt 100 years from now to know?*

I tried.

I hope more people will try.

One of the things I did. We used to have Local Government Week. I got the kids to Chatelech who seldom went to council meetings or anything. But I got the Regional District chambers for an afternoon, and I had these... they were almost like personalities. Okay, you're a councillor, you're a senior citizen, you're only interested in things that senior citizens are interested in. And you're a councillor and you are younger and you're very sports minded, and you're only interested in sports things. And so on. And one was the mayor. And they had their little scenerio. Another one was a municipal clerk. What they had to do was they had so much money and they had to come up with a budget. But they had to play these parts.

They all broke into groups. And they really had a good time. And I had a good time. And I think they really got an idea of what happens in local government. Half of them didn't even know if

they were in Sechelt or the Regional District.

But we don't do stuff like that anymore. The school should be doing that, hand in hand with Sechelt.

But they used to think-people like Herder and Shanks-thought that was fluff.

*But your future leaders come from that.*

That's right.

Sechelt is a huge municipality now. We go right out to Redroofs and down to Rat Portage. So our boundaries are huge.

If we had a hospital in Pender Harbour, I'd move up there. You've seen what they've done down at Madeira Park with the harbour. Beautiful. What do we do? We build condominiums, cheek by jowl. That's what I mean about planning.