

FIX CANADA

COVID-19th Edition

Jeff Willerton

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**Dedicated to the memory
of
Norman Ross Willerton**

a genuine servant-leader
who taught me how to read and write
and stand up for what I believe in.
And lick a bowl of ice cream clean.

*He was my dad,
and a guy couldn't have asked
for a better example
of how to do life.*

Who Is Saying What About This

“I wasn't expecting much when I opened this book. Was I in for a surprise! Absolutely fantastic!”

Ritchie Johnston, Retired Consultant

“I don't do politics and have never read a political book in my life... until now. Wow!”

Jennifer Gardiner, Executive Administrative Assistant

“I don't read. Reading puts me to sleep. But I read this in one day. I couldn't put it down. *It was better than watching a movie!*”

Randy Bell, Millwright

“Willerton's words are infectious and refreshing, and I've read this collection of them four times... thus far!”

James Hansen Stock Car Racer

“Willerton hits the bull's-eye in the middle of the bull's-eye... every time!”

Ben Hildebrandt, Businessman

“This is the only book I've ever read – five times!”

Ernie Boehm, Retired Chef

“The only other author I've read seven times is Tolkien!”

Dmytro Kushneryk, Prep Cook

“If, during times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act as George Orwell put it, then Willerton is the real McCoy as every page of this book – which I've read ten plus times now – is pregnant therewith.”

Tim Dobson, Entrepreneur

Prologue

There is a right/left paradigm in the political universe, and there are assuredly crackpots aplenty in both camps. On the far right is 0% government or anarchy, and only complete loons aspire to it. On the far left is 100% government or communism which, if history means anything, is equally undesirable. The space to the left of center is shared by liberals and socialists who, insofar as they contribute to society's leftward drift (and thus toward 100% government) were once referred to by V.I. Lenin as communism's "useful idiots."

This book is a collection of columns about a variety of political issues and personalities, many of whom could safely be described as such. These are followed by updates on the issues contained therein, with just enough history mixed in to make things make sense. As one reader exclaimed, "It's like Willerton has taken what are sometimes obscure historical facts and current events, pieced them together into a puzzle and presented it in a way that anyone can understand it."

Common Sense was a series of pamphlets written by Thomas Paine in 1775-6 advocating American independence from Great Britain. Willerton has been described as the Tom Paine of our generation, but unlike his, Willerton's vitriol is reserved, not for our mother country, but for the liberalism that afflicts it, us, and almost all western nations.

So be advised: like the fabled beanstalk that, having climbed it, gave young Jack a different perspective on this world, so too the plain words of *FIX CANADA* may change the way you view the sociopolitical events of our day.

Introduction

This book comes about as the result of the death of a very fine man. John Moerman was a teenager in WWII Holland where he worked with the Dutch underground protecting downed Allied airmen. One day he had coffee with an SS officer at his kitchen table while hiding one such airman directly underneath. It's the stuff movies are made of!

After the war, John married his sweetheart Corrie before the happy couple immigrated to the country of their liberators where they pastored churches in the Edmonton area for forty years. Retiring to a small acreage, John would there go on to become a prolific writer, not of books, but of letters to the editor in which he would articulately take on the left-leaning establishment and defend those who could not do so themselves, a cause to which he often returned. As son Jack eulogized, his father fearlessly took on both Nazis and Canadian politicians alike!

His work was sent regularly to over 200 publications across Canada. And thus it happened that when the editor of our local weekly needed a conservative columnist to complete his revised editorial page, the retired pastor heard the call. That is to say he heard the phone ring, accepted the offered promotion and became a very fine weekly columnist. Sadly, it would be his last paying gig. Six months later, without so much as a hint of either physical or mental decline, he was gone.

To understand how John affected the lives of the people he touched, one need only consider the example of the receptionist at the doctor's office where he had been taking his beloved Corrie before his passing. The two had been there about a dozen times. When informed of why a forthcoming appointment had to be canceled (his passing) she—the receptionist—simply exploded into tears right there in the office. Such was the effect he had on people who knew him even casually. I know because I count myself among them.

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It had been my privilege to meet John on three occasions. The first was in my role as a salesman in 1997. I introduced myself. He interjected: "Would that be the same Jeff Willerton who ran for Social Credit down in Calgary two weeks ago?" Note there were probably 300 candidates across the province in that election, Alberta is three times the size of a unified Germany and I was a long way from home. Obviously this gentleman had a mind for details. He and Corrie and I coffeed away the balance of a very enjoyable afternoon in their quaint abode, about a stone's throw north of Mayerthorpe, Alberta.

The second time we met was at their 50th wedding anniversary into which I almost accidentally stumbled. Cornered by an acquaintance into competing in a karaoke contest at the local hotel, I once again found myself in Mayerthorpe. Trophy in hand, on the way out of town I stopped to coffee with yet another acquaintance who informed me of the then ongoing festivities to which an open invitation had been extended, and to which I informed him we simply had to go. Again, a good time was had with the Moermans.

The third, two days later, was a brief encounter in which I gave John some literature he'd requested. It was brief but, as always, meaningful. He concluded it by looking me in the eye and, with a little twinkle in his own, saying "I think we think alike on a lot of issues." It was a meaningful encounter with a great man made more so by his sudden departure from the world five days later.

Of course, John's passing left more than an ache in the heart of all who knew him; it also left a column-sized void on the editorial page of our local paper. And I wanted that space! I'd been writing letters to the editor for some time, as had John before being elevated to the status of weekly columnist. His last words to me were, in effect, that we were of the same mind on many issues – *a veritable passing of the mantle if you will!* In the beginning, the space he had occupied became a guest column. Your humble scribe filled it every week but three in the ensuing six months, at which point the powers that be finally succumbed to mounting public pressure (I'm

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public!) and gave it to me as my own byline. Much of what you hold in your hand is a compilation of those columns written over the year and a half following John's passing. Or, more accurately, close approximations thereof.

When a column or article is republished with a date included, it is implied that what follows was originally published, verbatim, on that date. Because the columns collected herein have been edited at times for brevity and/or clarity, so as not to contravene the above, the dates of publication were removed from some recent editions. The problem is, this inevitably removed some context for the reader. So in this, the COVID-19th Edition of *FIX CANADA* (which is literally my nineteenth attempt to get this book right) I've made the command decision to reinstate the dates. I calculate that if the prime minister can fly to a Bahamian island on the Aga Khan's dime and spend the weekend at the cottage with the fam after telling the rest of us not to, I can bend the rules a little and give you both better columns *and* context.

With that little housekeeping detail out of the way, I will conclude this portion of the introduction by repeating that the book you're presently reading came about in no small part as the result of the passing of a very fine man, and truer words would be hard to find. His name was John Moerman, and I hope in these opening pages to have in some small way honoured his memory.

The column was largely a critique of the liberal policies imposed on us by various levels of government. Left-leaning federates, for instance, have done more than their share of damage to this country, and unfortunately the provinces have by and large marched lock step with them to the edge of the abyss.

Ralph Klein, for instance, the country's then most supposedly conservative premier, spent money more liberally per capita than any other provincial leader in the history of Confederation. He had it to spend you might argue, but so did Peter Lougheed (the province's first in a long line of Conservative premiers) and it was clearly the latter's

unbridled spending that landed Alberta in the soup in the first place. Both men's enduring reputations as conservative hawks simply testifies to the efficacy of double-speak and smoke-and-mirror politics, as you will see.

Ralph Klein has shuffled off the mortal coil, of course, and Jean Chretien, another prominent figure in the book, has long since departed the political stage. So why read about them? Why did your humble scribe read a book about Lougheed twenty years after he left office? Or why would one ever read about Trudeau Sr., or Napoleon? Because it's history, of course, and we all know what happens if we don't learn from it....

The columns were written as issues arose, so to read them chronologically would be to bounce from one issue and jurisdiction to another and back again. To simplify, the book has been divided into two sections. The first deals primarily with provincial issues in Alberta, issues largely shared by other provinces. The author might have written a similar column in P.E.I., for instance, but it's probably a good thing this unfolded in Alberta as Ralph Klein cut a somewhat more national and obviously more colourful figure than Pat Binns. Who? Exactly! The second section deals with federal and international issues. An attempt was also made to gather issues together, when possible, without violating the above divisions.

Being somewhat controversial, obviously the column was not without its detractors. One memorable day a reader tore a strip off me for a) spilling too much ink on the then governing provincial Tories [understandably, as he was a member of their local constituency association] and b) being overly negative.

To respond to the second accusation first, I confess my guilt: I was negative. One must add, though, that it would be a poor columnist indeed who put a positive spin on events while being governed into the proverbial toilet. The author is no defender of socialist governments (perish the thought) but the NDP didn't create the mess that was Alberta in 2015, except insofar as they promoted the province's leftward drift from the opposition benches. So they didn't create it so much as inherit it, but as can be expected from an overtly socialist

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government they proceeded to take a bad thing and make it demonstrably worse by growing government, raising taxes, shutting down an entire industry (in this case, coal) and generally turning what was an ailing economy into a veritable briar patch.

In response to the accusation of spilling too much ink on the provincial Tories, a) it was a political column, b) they were in power, and c) as another reader aptly put it, “They deserved every drop!” And so they did. They’re far from alone, of course, but if the most notably conservative government in Canada was as liberal—and thus duplicitous—as revealed in these pages, we obviously have a lot of rooting out to do. And not only provincially.

The federal Liberals and what was the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada have not only been almost equally culpable for our nation’s decline, they’ve been virtually indistinguishable. They’ve been aptly compared to two vehicles splashing each other with mud, traveling on the same road, in the same direction to the exact same destination, and sadly what is now the Conservative Party of Canada is becoming more ‘progressive’ by the day, but I’ll come back to that.

The players were, of course, well aware of the over-arching similarities between the parties and apparently entirely comfortable under either banner. Tory cabinet minister and one-time party leader Jean Charest, for instance, served as the Liberal premier of Quebec for three terms; admitted Trudeau fan and long-time Liberal Ralph Klein likewise served as the Conservative premier of Alberta for almost fourteen years; and one-time Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark was seen campaigning for our very own Benedict Arnold (aka Scott Brison) in Nova Scotia in 2004.

If you can’t quite place the name, Benedict Arnold was BFF with George Washington and a general in the revolutionary army before defecting to the British, making him pretty much the ultimate floor-crosser. If you’re over seventy and unfamiliar with the acronym, BFF stands for ‘best friends

forever', the closeness of their relationship making the defection that much more egregious.

North of the 49th, many Canadians seem determined to vote as they and their families have for the last hundred years, apparently more concerned with maintaining tradition than seeking good governance. I'm referring now to those who persist in voting Tory no matter how liberal they become; Liberal no matter how corrupt they're revealed to be; or NDP regardless of the carnage they leave behind every time they manage to grasp the levers of the economy.

Many Albertans, for instance, will vote for the United Conservative Party come hell or high water, a) because they always vote for the party with 'Conservative' in its name (which is better than voting for the party with 'Liberal' in its name, but that's not saying much) b) because they like its charming leader whom you'll learn more about in these pages, or c) to keep the Liberals and the NDP at bay. That last reason is entirely laudable by the way, but my objective in publishing this collection of words is to help people across the country make better, more informed choices going forward. In the voting booth. And maybe elsewhere, too. You'll see.

And without question it was a privilege to write the column that got this ball rolling. I have no formal training as a writer nor in the subject matter contained herein. I'm just a high school educated layman who likes to play connect the dots and has a passion for promoting better government. To do so, obviously it would help to know a little bit about the subject.

To that end you might say I've built a sort of grid of information over the years through which new information and events are filtered. To the extent the grid is faulty, so too will be my interpretation of said developments. Likewise, to the extent the grid is properly built. You will be the judge as to its construction.

To understand the early columns, one must be made aware of what were then some recent developments in the province. One was the Supreme Court of Canada's Vriend decision in April of 1998 in which the high court agreed with an Alberta

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Court of Queen's Bench ruling to read 'sexual orientation' into the province's Individual Rights legislation. Another was that over the previous years the Tory government had brought electronic gambling devices known as Video Lottery Terminals into the province and placed them pretty much anywhere a person could sit down for a cold one.

Vriend, VLTs, judge-made law, major political cover-ups and many other issues are dealt with in these pages. Occasionally some good news even creeps in. Depending on one's existing paradigm, or world view, one might find points with which one agrees and others with which one will perhaps even strongly disagree. Hopefully more of the former than the latter.

Should the column itself, though, have been written? It was well received by the readership, so probably, yes. But what of the book? More to the point, should it have been honed and redesigned these several times as I approach the publication of this nineteenth and (keeping in mind that I've said this fourteen times now) presumably final edition? In fact, I was almost daily asking myself a similar question in the spring of '07 for reasons that will later be made clear. The answer came while reading a book on 18th century philosopher Adam Smith.

Smith is widely revered as the Father of Capitalism for his work, *Wealth of the Nations* (1776). This much I knew. What I discovered therein was that *Wealth* was almost an addendum to his earlier, seminal work entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. This he first published in 1759 – and republished, “honed and redesigned,”¹ five times in the thirty-one years following.

Well hold the phone and note the timing! Questioning if I was on the right road publishing and republishing a book to a significant extent on Smith's 'moral sentiments' – social issues in today's lingo – it came to my attention the one I was on had been trod by no less than the Father of Capitalism himself! The moment was surreal, and after it there was simply no question about continuing with this project. Not everyone will share my enthusiasm.

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Comparing the home of the brave with our native land, one McGill University economist surmised: “You can be a social conservative in the U.S. without being labeled a whacko. Not in Canada.” If this is true, some will be tempted to write me off in short order.

I believe, for instance, that it’s wrong for society to normalize, promote or, disregarding a little thing called freedom of speech, in any way discourage the legitimate criticism of what many consider an emerging plethora of harmful lifestyle choices. I likewise believe that it’s wrong for governments to place what’s known as the crack cocaine of gambling devices under people’s noses in bars and restaurants across the land, and like John Moerman before me I also do my editorial best to defend those yet incapable of doing so themselves.

One is, of course, free to disagree with any or all of these positions. Unfortunately for those who do, those issues are the first three dealt with in the book you’re presently reading and comprise the first approximately dozen columns. And then like a dog with a bone buried in the back yard, I occasionally return to them.

Winston Churchill defined a fanatic as “one who can’t change his mind and won’t change the subject.” Again you will be the judge, this time as to whether I qualify.

I by no means have the final word on the issues contained herein, but humbly submit my thoughts on them to you for your consideration. They may enrich or enrage you—or both—but I suspect they won’t leave you entirely unmoved. Enjoy!