

submission from
BILL HORNE
Wells, BC

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing as an artist and small business owner with 15 years' experience in small town BC. I am also a Director of our Local Chamber of Commerce and the Vice-President of CARFAC BC, the provincial affiliate of Canadian Artists' Representation/*le front des artistes canadiens*.

The two main things I would like you to consider are the restoration of **all** Gaming monies to the non-profit sector, without any strings attached, and a tripling of the province's investment in the cultural sector.

The seasonal tourism economy in the north central interior is fragile enough as it is, especially in the wake of the recession, the pine beetle epidemic and this summer's forest fires. I know that the gallery my wife and I operate brought in just 60% of the sales we had in 2009, and we are doing better than many people.

The decline in tourist numbers and sales makes us acutely aware of the impact of things like drastic cuts to the arts budget, the dissolution of Tourism BC, the siphoning of Gaming monies from non-profits, the unpredictable and unstable application of policy and funding in the arts sector, and the introduction of the HST.

Those of us who operate businesses in small communities are dependent on each other's successes for our individual survival. Although it might be simpler to process HST remittances for our own particular business, its negative effect on local restaurants is causing less of their customers to circulate or stay in our town. The effect on outdoor tourism operators is another negative that will impact us, too.

My wife and I moved to Wells in part because of the existence of Island Mountain Arts, a non-profit which has been offering arts programs and operating a gallery for over 30 years. In recent years it has also organized the ArtsWells Festival.

There is no question of its significant role in the culture and economy of our region. The relatively small investments of public funding this organization has received have a ripple effect that is estimated to bring \$500K each summer to the north Cariboo, and easily twice that when the Festival is included.

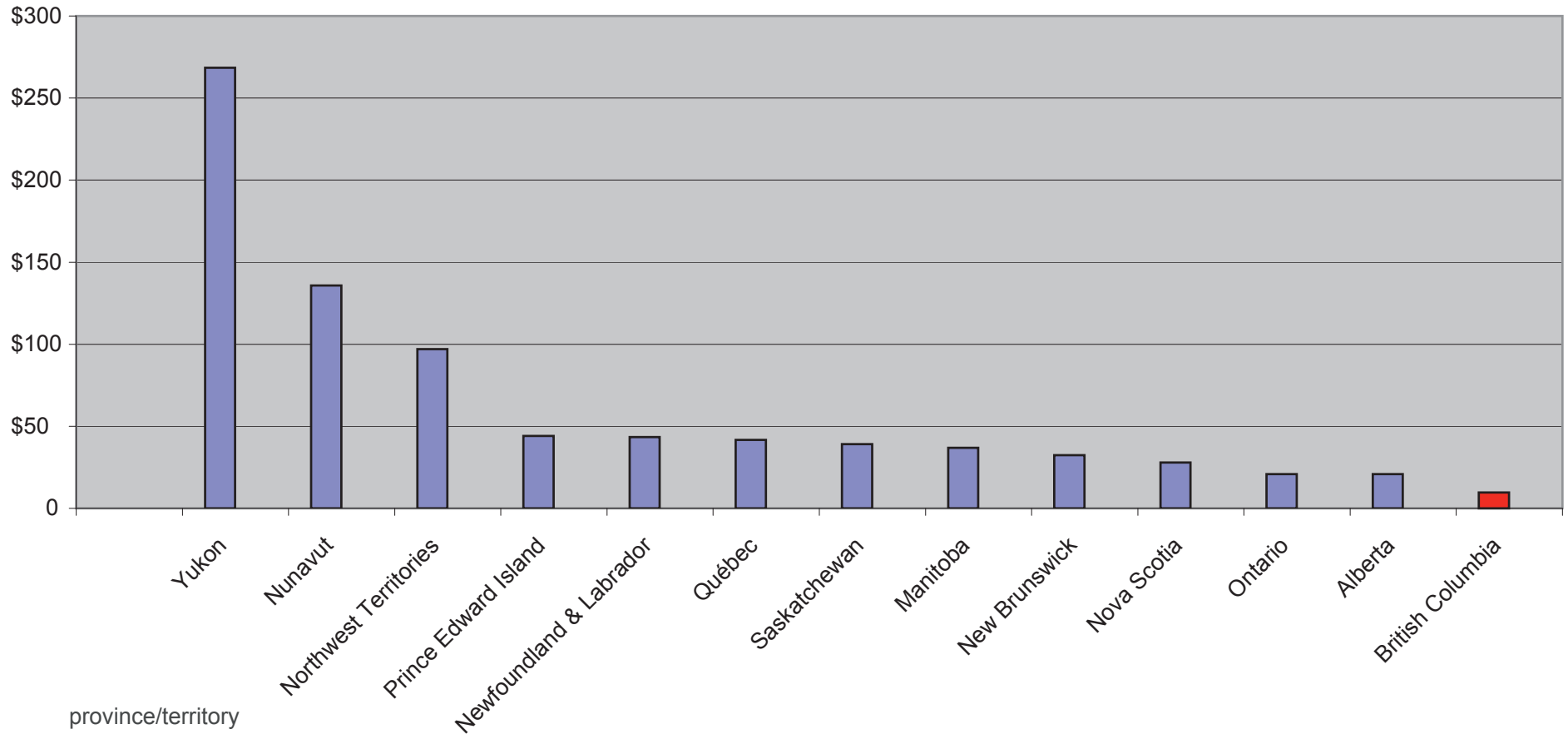
When the government cuts arts funding, changes gaming fund rules, changes them again, changes rules retroactively, it wreaks havoc in the arts sector. It makes it extremely difficult for volunteer boards and staff to carry out a sound business plan. It creates uncertainty among businesses such as ours, as well as accommodations and restaurants, and it weakens our already fragile market.

Imagine the outcry from industry if the government were to slash funding to the school of forestry at UBC, or from mining if geology programs were cut. From this point of view, I believe that the reckless, disproportionate cuts to the arts — without consultation with the sector's stakeholders — has threatened to undermine the potential of our province's creative economy. And because the arts are not as separate from the majority of British Columbians as the government may like to think, these ill-advised policies are undermining other parts of our economy as well.

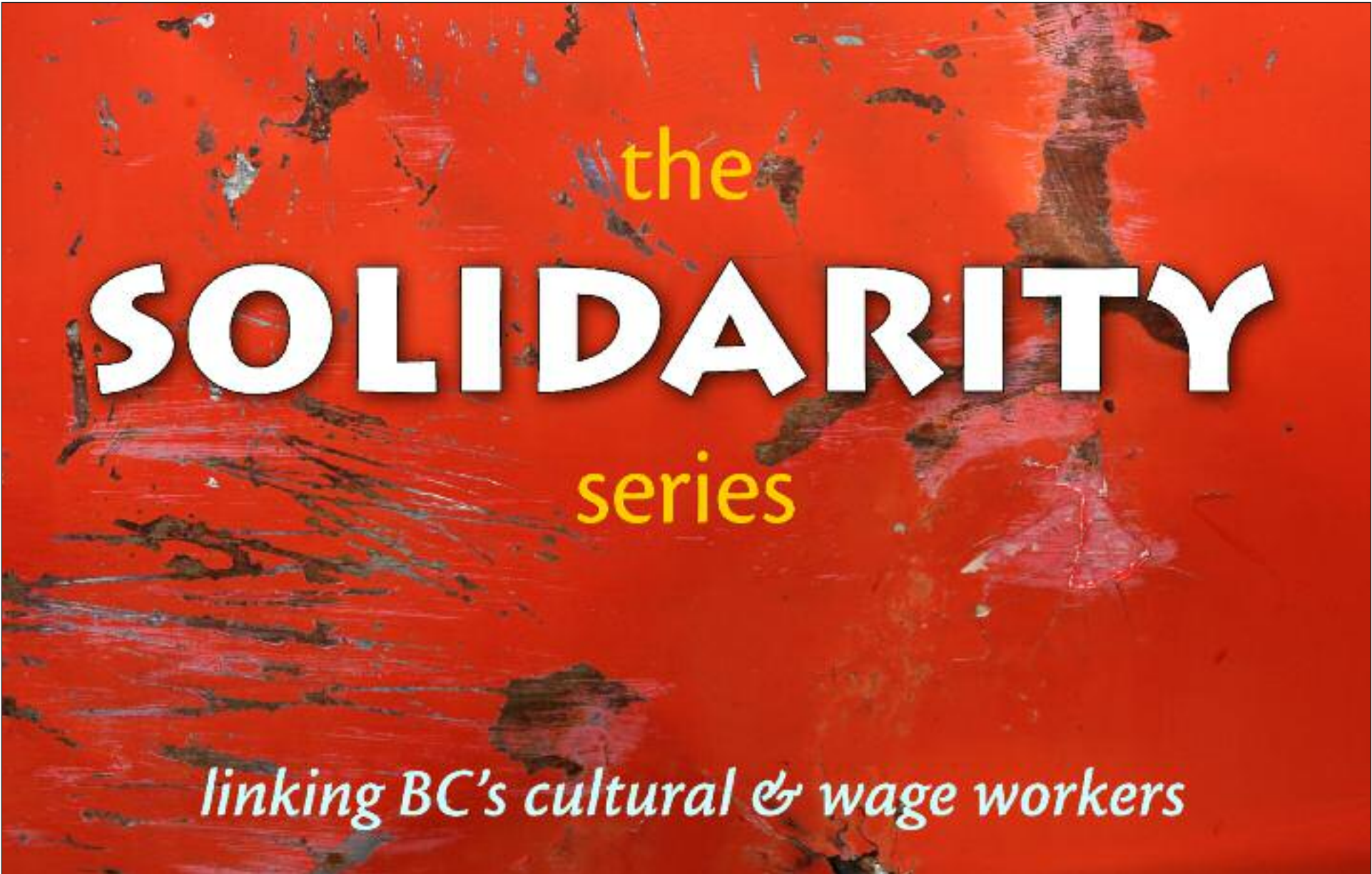
Last fall I began creating a series of portraits of people in various trades and occupations who support a strong arts sector. Their participation and enthusiasm underlines our connectivity and contradicts the myth that the arts are elitist and somehow separate. The response to my online "Solidarity Series" has been very positive, both from artists and from non-artists. I hope you enjoy the samples on the following pages. The complete text can be found at www.claireart.ca.

2338 Bowman Crescent, Box 41, Wells, BC V0K 2R0 250-994-2332

Per capita arts funding 2007-2008



...before the cuts!

The background is a vibrant red color with a distressed, industrial aesthetic. It features numerous scratches, scuffs, and areas where the red paint has been rubbed away, revealing a darker, brownish-grey surface underneath. The overall texture is rough and weathered.

the
SOLIDARITY
series

linking BC's cultural & wage workers

BILL HORNE



Cariboo farmers Janet Allen and Murray Boal; photo © Bill Horne

Farmers say Restore Arts Funding!

Cariboo farmers Janet Allen and Murray Boal want the BC government to restore arts funding to pre-election levels.

Both farmers are angry that the BC government claimed that culture was the “second pillar” of its bid for the 2010 Olympics, and now has slashed arts funding by up to 90% over the next two years.

“We work hard producing nutritious food, but we know people also need the nourishment of books, art, dance, theatre and music,” said Allen.

“Our economy needs it, too,” she said. Allen notes that every dollar invested by the province in the arts returns between \$1.05 and \$1.36 directly to provincial treasuries through tax revenues.

“Surely it makes sense to invest in this sector during the recession, especially considering the growing importance of cultural tourism for jobs.”

Boal says the government ought to be ashamed of devoting the lowest percentage of all provinces of its operating budget to culture in spite of having the largest percentage of its labour force in arts occupations. “We’re investing less than half the national average,” he says. “Québec invests nearly four times what we do. We need to narrow this gap, not make it worse.”

Dragon Mountain Farm was established in 1979 and has supplied 120 North Cariboo households with vegetables every summer since 1997. It is located 35 km southeast of Quesnel, BC on the Quesnel River.

As well as farming, Murray Boal has worked as a woodworker and a musician. He has recorded four CDs, the latest with Bob Campbell as the “wingdamramblers”. Janet Allen has a keen interest in social justice issues and is involved in local economic development. In her spare time she enjoys working with horses and border collies. For his part, Nick loves chasing the ball.



Forestry workers Michel Bernier and Jerry Krouzel; photo © Bill Horne

Forest Workers: “Give Back ALL the Gaming Money!”

Forestry workers Michel Bernier and Jerry Krouzel are mad about what the BC government has done with gaming money.

Bernier and Krouzel are currently working on a fuel management and fire protection program near Barkerville Historic Town in BC's north Cariboo. Both are incensed about the negative impact of the gaming money grab on the hinterland's culture and economy, because the resource sector provides so much of the province's revenues.

“That money was meant to go to non-profits and the arts ,” says Bernier. “They should give back ALL of it,” noting that although the government returned some gaming money, many non-profit and arts organizations weren't eligible. “They didn't say anything about this during last spring's election.”

“Non-profits and arts groups are very important, especially in small communities in the hinterland, but they're fragile. This funding can make or break them,” said Krouzel.

As one local example, gaming money has made up more than 10% of Island Mountain Arts annual budget in Wells. Its Board is now struggling to make up the shortfall or cut its programming.



Devlin's Bench gold miners Rob Dakau and Dave Jorgenson; photo © Bill Horne

Northern Miners Support Artists

Devlin's Bench gold miners Rob Dakau and Dave Jorgenson are strongly opposed to recent cuts to BC's arts budget.

“When government ministers try to pit artists against hungry children, that's a false dichotomy,” says heavy equipment operator Rob Dakau. “It's not an elite thing. Children in our region benefit from art classes at Island Mountain Arts in Wells. And they learn to think creatively.”

Jorgenson, Devlin's Bench mine manager and a Past President of the Wells & District Chamber of Commerce, says “our culture and our economy are interconnected. Some of us at the mine host musicians during the annual ArtsWells Festival; others provide security; most of us try to attend. Events like ArtsWells bring much-needed dollars to our community.”

He believes the government ought to be investing in the arts during the recession instead of making drastic cuts.

Pete Wright, whose company operates the mine, says that in a small community like Wells, tiny investments in the arts generate a positive ripple effect in the local economy. “In my business, I have to look ahead and consider the global economy. Countries like Singapore are investing in the arts for long term growth – why aren't we?”

The Devlin's Bench Gold Mine is located near Barkerville and Wells in BC's north Cariboo.



Prince George pulp mill worker, Denise Dauvin; photo © Bill Horne

Pulp Mill Workers Love BC Music!

Prince George pulp mill worker, Denise Dauvin, loves her tunes and is unhappy about recent cuts to the arts in BC that affect the province's musicians.

"Sara McLachlan is one of my faves," said Dauvin at the truck dumps, "and she's right when she says the cuts are a tragedy."

McLachlan has been speaking out against the cuts in the media recently and has said she thinks "the arts and culture are a huge part of what makes our part of the world vibrant."

Dauvin likes the music of Roy Forbes, too, and wonders what support there will be for budding musicians who come from far-flung corners of the province like he did (Forbes hails from Dawson Creek). As one example of the current crisis in the arts, Music BC faces cuts to its travel assistance program, operating funds, and the Western Canadian Music Awards.

She believes that music is an essential creative outlet for children, and as important as sports and education in a child's growth and development.

"Why is our government cutting culture at a time when US President Barack Obama has just named 25 artists and educators, to a national arts advisory committee, and the US Congress has increased funding the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities?" asks Dauvin.

"If they think it's smart to invest in the arts during a recession, why can't we?"

Dauvin has been a heavy equipment operator at the pulpmill for over seven years.



Cariboo sled dog mushers, Lorraine and Danny Kozar; photo © Bill Horne

Mushers say gaming money belongs to youth, PACs, arts & sports!

Cariboo sled dog mushers Danny & Lorraine Kozar want the BC government to give back gaming money to youth, PACs, the arts and sports.

Pictured here near Wells, BC with “Leo” and “Odin”, just two of their Alaskan Malamutes, they say they understand why the government has pilfered gaming money.

“There was a social contract about gaming,” says Kozar. “It required a portion of lottery and casino monies to go back into communities for non-profits, but the government has broken that contract without any consultation whatsoever.”

Total revenues from commercial gaming in BC were approximately \$2.61 billion in the last year, and net gaming revenue for the province was about \$1.08 billion. Of this, \$156.3 million was redistributed to charities, and now, they’ll receive much less.

Danny and Lorraine say, “Come on, boys and girls in Victoria – start giving back to our future generations, instead of taking.”

Their only access to Wells in the winter is via sled dog or snowmobile.



John Howarth and his dog Puck; photo © Bill Horne
Ibraim Ashow in front of engine #4019; photo © John Howarth

Train drivers love a good line!

Train drivers John Howarth and Ibraim Ashow love a good line in books and live readings, as well as on the tracks.

Howarth has helped organize two “poetry trains” for VIA Rail. In 2003 a group of poets traveled from Winnipeg to Prince George with the train sold out. The 2004 poets traveled from Prince George to Prince Rupert. In both cases, they gave readings as they traveled west, and in small communities where they stopped along the way.

Howarth was involved with the 1999 CBC Fred Eaglesmith train as well.

“These were amazing trips,” he said, “and the passengers really enjoyed the experience. I think the BC government is underestimating the public’s appreciation of literature when it slashes arts funding.”

Ashow agrees. “John and I have the privilege of seeing a lot of BC and Canada through our work. It’s beautiful country, but it’s empty without stories, songs and poems that originate throughout the land.” Ibraim was a student at BCIT who now works as a conductor for the Hudson’s Bay Railway in Manitoba.

“I always read BC BookWorld,” says Howarth, “and I like to shop at stores like Books & Company in Prince George. Instead of cutting funding, though, the government ought to be increasing its support for our home-grown publishing industry, like it would the forest industry, transportation or any other sector of our economy.”

Engine #4019 was built in 1955 and has one 16 cylinder diesel engine with 1500 HP.



Cheryl Macarthy, co-owner of the Bear's Paw Café and Frog in the Bog Gifts; photo © Bill Horne

Small Town Small Businesses Opposed to HST

Cheryl Macarthy operates a restaurant and gift shop in Wells, BC and doesn't want the government to implement the HST as proposed.

“Our numbers were down this summer already. Tacking on another 7% to meals will discourage tourists from eating here and from staying long enough to spend some of their money in other local businesses. The economy is fragile enough in small towns without the government making it worse.”

Macarthy is angry that the government said nothing about the HST during the election, and hasn't consulted with small businesses at all.

“They've destroyed Tourism BC, slashed arts funding essential for attracting visitors to our region, and increased taxes. It doesn't make any economic sense.”

Macarthy's restaurant, the Bear's Paw Café, won a Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association award in 2008 for marketing “outside the box”. It's located across Highway 26 from her gift shop, the “Frog on the Bog”.



Heather Peters, Bruce Self and their dog Mort; photo © Bill Horne

BC Hunters enjoy a good story!

Heather Peters and Bruce Self enjoy their books as much as they enjoy hunting in BC's rugged Cariboo-Chilcotin. "One of the pleasures of hunting," said Peters, "is curling up with a novel at night. Or later in the winter after a meal of deer or moose."

"We feel fortunate to not only know where our food has come from, but to have harvested it ourselves, in our own region," added Self. "A large portion of our diet comes from within a short radius of where we live."

Peters and Self support the concept of home-grown, "100 Mile" culture, too, and have amassed a collection of books by BC and Canadian authors. They're upset about recent cuts to the arts in BC.

"Why on earth has the provincial government removed all funding from the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia, BC BookWorld newspaper, and the BC Association of Magazine Publishers?" asks Peters. "It defies economic sense."

Self notes that many BC writers, such as Douglas Coupland (*Generation X*) and William Gibson (*Neuromancer*), along with authors of national stature like Margaret Atwood, have spoken out against the provincial government's cuts. Gibson has decried the policies as "guaranteed to rot the fabric of our province's future."

Ironically, BC has one of the highest book reading rates per capita in Canada, yet the province's funding for literature is among the lowest in the country.

Peters, who is completing her PhD in Social Work, co-edited *Structural Social Work in Action: Examples from Practice*, and Self is a former street nurse. Heather shoots a Remington 30-06; Bruce shoots a Husqvarna 30-06 with a custom stock. Mort, their dog, is a Chesapeake and likes to hunt grouse mano a mano.



Dan "Grizz" Pinette and his backhoe; the Sunset Theatre, Wells, BC
photos © Bill Horne

Backhoe Drivers dig live BC Theatre

Dan “Grizz” Pinette is willing to make personal sacrifices to support live theatre. When the Sunset Theatre in Wells suffered extensive roof damage from the high snow load in the winter of 2009, he was quick to offer to shave off all his hair to raise money for repairs.

When the time came, he not only allowed his daughter Lexie to shave his head, he let her take his beard and moustache off, too, when several people offered additional donations.

“It was the first time in 39 years I was without my beard, and it felt strange,” said Grizz, “but it was worth it.” His community raised over \$9000 to help repair the theatre and he was able to contribute \$5700.00 of that. The Sunset Theatre is resuming its programming this summer.

Pinette’s passion for theatre leaves him shaking his head over recent cuts to arts funding in BC. “Culture was the Second Pillar of the Olympics,” he says, “so why would the government cut it down with a financial chainsaw?”

According to Sue Porter, Executive Director of the Greater

Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance, “many companies are struggling with large debt loads after having funding withdrawn after being assured it would come.”

Others have had to cancel their outreach programs to youth and seniors, as they have just enough to keep the doors open, but not enough to be able to engage the communities they work in more widely.

Bas Rynsewyn of Serious Moonlight Productions in Prince George notes that the cuts are adding pressure to stage more productions of American works that draw audiences, and we can expect to see fewer works from Canadian playwrights. “Call it another form of outsourcing,” he said.

Grizz is upset that the arts cuts have led some of BC’s greatest creators, administrators, and technical staff to leave for other jurisdictions. “It makes me feel like Shakespeare’s King Lear – ‘howl, howl, howl, howl!’”

The Caterpillar 4x4 428 has a 125 HP engine and a bucket capacity of 1.5 yards.