

# LETTERS

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## Re: David Suzuki 'Science Matters' column—January 18, 2018

To the Editor,

Based on personal experience I would contend some points:

- True cost of Ontario Renewable Wind is high thanks to naive Government meddling/insane contracts. Politicians being sneaky have pushed costs back beyond the next election—scandalous! Costs will add to those from cancelled Gas Plants! Ontarians must be wary, given we will pay oodles for mistakes in the last decades “renewables

gold rush”.

- Canada is the leading “green” first world country in producing electricity—true! But where is this touted? It’s sexier to criticize ourselves. Fact is Hydro—water—Power has long been a bastion. Hydro can “quasi store” energy. Why pick on Hydro—there are many pluses!
- Politicians and good energy decisions are strangers to each other, but I contend BC

has taken a correct step regarding Site C Hydro Dam Project. Who knows maybe “sense” will also stretch to safe transport of oil by pipeline rather than train.

- Natural methane gas emits from Canada’s northern lakes and is apparently a perfectly natural phenomenon. Should we fill in our natural affected lakes—clearly not! Seems a weak argument against Hydro?

- Battery storage could be a major improvement for renewable power producers if it works!

- Without storage, renewables are minor players but let’s see how Auzzie pilot project works. Until then we still need “base load power” from more proven sources.

- Indigenous rights—from recent experience the voice of the local indigenous leaders are drowned out by well

financed lobby group interests emanating south of the border. For some reason, we rarely hear local pro-voices. True voices favour—and need—responsible development.

- Lastly, I’m skeptical about anything Brazil is doing—other than soccer. Sadly, Brazilian politicians are even more bent and whacky than our own.

Mike Hall,  
consulting engineer

## SPORTS TALK

### What’s wrong with Canadian Soccer?

As a follow-up to last week’s article about the successes Iceland has been able to achieve internationally in the sport of soccer, I thought to have a deep overview of the challenges of Canadian soccer as a whole.

The first problem would be a lack of clear goals. If Canada Soccer—the governing body of the sport—had any clear long-term goals, the goals don’t seem to be well publicised. What they seem to be focused on are programs, which tells me they want to appear to be busy, but do not want to be held accountable to the standard scrutiny that comes with achieving or not achieving well stated goals.

Nothing could illustrate this fact better than the recent sack of Head Coach of the men’s program, Octavio Zambrano. The Ecuador born former player has had both playing and coaching experience across North and South America as well as in Europe.

He was hired in March 2017, with the task of getting the men’s team to have a clear identity and, of course, in the long run to qualify and ultimately win competitions.

His recruitment seemed like a well thought out plan. Many felt it meant the Canadian soccer teams would now begin to play in a deliberate way, which should be mirrored in all age group levels of the game. This would make development and transition between the various

By **Michael Oke** age groups easier and smoother. It would also help identify quickly players who would be a natural fit for “the Canadian system” as well as help others adapt.

Zambrano’s first game in charge was a friendly against Curaçao on June 13, 2017 in a 2-1 win in Montreal. He then guided Canada to the quarter-finals of the 2017 CONCACAF Gold Cup a month later, the Reds’ first appearance in the knock-out stage of the tournament since 2009. So things seemed to be looking up.

Well, not so fast. Just about 10 months after this “long term plan” was initiated, it was discarded. John Herdman, the hitherto head coach of the women’s program was brought in to replace Zambrano. There are many words to describe this, but the easiest for me is “shambles”.

I have nothing against Herdman. He has been relatively successful during his stint with the Canadian women, but now he has to start again from scratch. What brand of football will the Canadian team play? How long will it take for the players to adapt and trust Herdman’s view of how things should be run? Your guess is as good as mine.

Herein lies the problem with Canadian Soccer—a lack of direction. I do pray for all our sakes they get their acts together and fast.

## JUST A THOUGHT

### Round and round we go

Well, that was quite a week, now wasn’t it? So much juicy news, you could almost hear the media salivating as they quietly thanked Santa for the belated presents. It was like someone had baited the water and suddenly we were in the middle of a feeding frenzy. News alerts. Press Conferences. Twitter feeds. Smartphones were inundated, all aglow with stories from every perspective and every angle. And nowhere was safe. Televisions, radios—heck even a simple Google search tantalized us with new pictures, new details, new perspectives. Sexual misconduct by Patrick Brown. Targeted double murder of Barry and Honey Sherman. Resignation of the PC leader and president four months before the provincial election. Trump’s first State of the Union address. Bullying by Elizabeth May. Bruce McArthur: serial killer. Doug Ford future premier? The list really is that endless.

But these are not just news stories. Some are the shenanigans of politics gone amok. Others the acts of those who wish to redefine social justice and cultural norms. Kid yourself not: the media has always been a tool in the political game and we are merely into a whole new level of play. Ironically, the word journalist summons in my head a much different picture than this new reality. Journalists seemed calmer, almost mundane as they relayed the truths of our world to us. I know behind the scenes they were most assuredly frantic folks, likely dishevelled in yesterday’s clothes as they pulled all-nighters checking sources so that the morning edition would be chalk full of the news we needed. Yet, the word media still conjures for me



By **Trish Bell**

overtly elaborate albeit useless desks and sets, behind which wacky hairstyles and boring suits told me what had taken shape in the most dry and uncaring voices imaginable. What can I say? I grew up with six o’clock news and daily newspapers. There was no Twitter to give me minute by minute descriptions of court cases, dripping with raw emotion. No text alert that my world had somehow changed while I was busy living. Everything was relayed to us, on schedule, in a calm, almost monotone fashion. Caring, sure, but with all the excitement of watching a room full of wet paint dry. Kids didn’t watch the news much for a reason. We were blissfully uninterested which likely shielded us from the worries and pessimism of the youth today. We didn’t know about bad news as it happened. Events were in the past. Journalists alone had to deal with raw news and they were the only ones telling the stories. They had time to investigate and digest the info—to see the spin for what it was—before their daily deadlines.

And we can’t blame journalists for all this change. They, too, are watching an industry that seemed untouchable and constant, full of purpose and—hopefully—integrity, be blackballed and pink slipped. As *The New Tanner* celebrates 20 years this month, it’s publishers inevitably must wonder whether it can weather the next 20. Gone are the days where as long as you were relaying the facts, you would have an audience. The media of today

must compete with that which is instantly gratifying if not so dependable—social media. Instantaneously, every moment is caught and shared with the world. Uploaded videos, bystander accounts, the “he said, she said” and those looking for their five minutes of fame all spewing out details—most of which might be optimistically classified as bias or opinion—yet, all of us all too eager to assimilate it as fact, as fast as we can. People now seem to want to know as it happens. They want the juicy tidbits. They want pictures and emotions and raw reactions and all the sensational horrors of news on the edge and they want it all 24/7 but forget that the same shocking need for gruesome details and instant play by plays fuels the fears, stereotypes and extremism that people claim to hate, giving people who abuse the news to their own ends an enormous opportunity. The days of the media being truth appear over. Truth is merely a side note now, in the shadow of shock and awe. What’s worse, we pass the buck and blame the messenger instead of seeing this new reality as our own making—a reality that makes it easier for us to be manipulated. Add algorithms, advertorials and all the other PR tricks up the sleeves of powerful people and it is a sloppy soup of cultural disaster. Of course, it can be argued that a lot of these elements were always at play, but, as they say, the times they are a changin’ and we seem to be transfixed on watching our own cultural demise play out on the tiny screens in our hands. Perhaps, it is time for all of us to stop preying on the bad news circuit and stop this downward spiral.

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