



NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
December 24, 2008

HOTTIES and NAUGHTIES for 2008

Civil Liberties Group Releases their Best and Worst for the Year

HOTTIES:

The Portland Hotel Society & the Vancouver Network of Drug Users

For bringing on the case that gave North America's first legal supervised injection site constitutional protection from prosecution under narcotics laws.

Peter Tinsley, Chair of the Military Police Complaint Commission

For ordering a full hearing into the military transfer of Afghan detainees at risk of torture - the first hearing of its kind since the Somalia incident.

Vancouver's New City Council

For promising to give the heave-ho to Project Civil City and a bye-bye to public funding of private security guards in public space.

Jack and Judy Aasen

Victims of an outrageous SLAPP suit, the Aasens defended themselves against a defamation claim by a private utilities owner who was involved in a dispute with several Vernon residents about utility rates. The Aasens won at the initial hearing and then got re-SLAPPED with an appeal which found that statements made by Jack *in his own home* that were secretly recorded by a private detective hired by the utilities owner to entrap the Aasens were defamatory. We salute the Aasens for fighting the good fight against libel chill (for who we do not salute, see "Naughty Number 2").

Province of Manitoba

For instituting civilian investigation of police incidents in cases of in-custody death or serious injury. Here's hoping BC gets inspired.

Victoria's Tent City

For initiating the case that brought us the landmark legal ruling that struck down a bylaw preventing homeless people from erecting temporary shelters.

NAUGHTIES:

The BC Government – Election Gag Laws

For trying to gag all the little people who might want to exercise their free speech rights during an election period. Citizen-muzzling certainly quiets things down but it's no way to run a democracy, folks.

Wally Oppal, BC Attorney General

Who says the government has no plans to change the laws to protect people like the Aasens against outrageous lawsuits designed to chill free speech on matters of public importance. Shame on you.

BC Transit Police

First, the tasing of fare-evaders and now, proposed police dogs on skytrains. Way to go winning those hearts and minds...

The RCMP

For the appalling and unforgivable campaign of character assassination attempts against Polish immigrant, Robert Dziekanski, who died at YVR after being repeatedly tasered by RCMP officers.

VANOC

For the Mega-Bucks Censorship manoeuvre of purchasing all the outdoor advertising spaces in Vancouver for the duration of the Games so that no one can get out any anti-Olympics messaging. Because speech isn't free when you *buy* it all.

The Federal Government

Trying to justify introducing invasive and sweeping police search practices under a secret "trade" agreement? Continuing to transfer Afghan detainees to Afghan authorities despite the high probability of torture? Trying to impose mandatory minimum sentencing for non-violent drug offenders? Failing to implement the recommendations of the Arar Commission? Oh gosh, it's like a box of assorted chocolates: so many choices and so hard to pick just one...

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