

RE: "Mayors dust off rule books to cool council critics: Local politics take on in-your-face tone", Patricia Emborg, "The Gazette West Island", Thu., May 31, 2007,

George Orwell said whenever he heard people cry out "I am free, I am free...", he heard chains rattling. Unfortunately, some of the local politicians cited in Patricia Emborg's article are part of the elected autocracy. It is a system that is increasingly immune to criticism: Democratic yes. Pluralistic no.

Limiting or deferring public questions raises a lot of red flags. Our parents and grandparents defeated the two faced-coin of communism and fascism. Our taxes are supposed to buy us a few words with "their Lordships". Alas, it is becoming more and more difficult to express one's freedom at the local level even though local politics is supposed to be the closest to the people.

Activism defines liberal democracy. There are so few of us willing to lay it on the line and attempt to improve the lot of the community at large. In my case, it is the defence of the natural environment and all the local issues from transport to ill-conceived development that encroach on everyone's right to a healthy life and a sustainable Earth.

The efforts of grass roots community groups such as the Green Coalition are miraculous given that much of our endeavours are based on sweat equity and out of pocket expenses.

Yours Sincerely,

Avrom David Shtern,
Green Coalition,
Transportation Issues,