

ELECTORAL AREA A Director's Update

From Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A

Nov
2021

Director's Report

Hello UNA/UBC/UEL neighbours,

As we clean up the debris from another November storm, this time from a rare tornado, I think back to how many deadly or at least damaging extreme weather events we've faced this year. At the same time, I hear the daily updates about the progress (or lack of?) at COP26, and I'll be honest, I'm having a hard time writing something optimistic here. For some perspective and inspiration, I reached out to UNA resident Hanno Pinder, one of our wiser neighbours, and someone whose opinions and actions I admire greatly. You can read more about my conversation with Hanno in the Community Connections section below.

At a provincial and regional level, I do think that we have reason for some optimism in our fight against the climate emergency. As I reported last month, the Metro Vancouver board recently passed a new Clean Air Plan, and staff continue to produce detailed and action-oriented "Road Maps" on eleven areas critical to the climate crisis (such as transportation, buildings, agriculture, nature-based solutions, etc.). Please let me know if you would like more detail on these.



On the provincial front, the new CleanBC Plan Roadmap to 2030 was released this month, with more ambitious targets and policies for our province. Two local experts in region – both of whom I respect – provide differing opinions on the strength of the plan. Climate policy researcher Seth Klein argues here that the plan doesn't go nearly far enough, while Alex Boston, director of SFU's Renewable Cities provides a more optimistic commentary here. I'll leave it up to each of you to determine whether you think that the plan is ambitious enough.

While our climate feels top of mind to me at the moment, this report covers a variety of topics that impact us either locally (within UBC/UEL/UNA) or regionally. I hope that some of the updates below catch your interest.

As always, please reach out if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns that I may be able to assist with.

All the best,

Jen McCutcheon

Jen McCutcheon, Metro Vancouver Director for Electoral Area A (www.areaajen.ca or areaajen@gmail.com)



It was nice to attend UBC's Remembrance Day ceremony in person again this year



Community Connections

This section highlights community initiatives and people that we think would be of interest to neighbours. Please send me your ideas about people who are going out of their way to make our neighbourhoods even better. I know there are lots of examples and I'd love to hear from you about some of them (email me at areaajen@gmail.com).

This month, I had the privilege of learning more a neighbour who has lived an extraordinary life. She is currently 90 years old and is sharper and more active than many people half her age. She is extremely well read and is thoughtful and deliberate in her approaches and actions. I very much appreciate her generously sharing some of

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her wisdom and insights with us. In a world where we often subjected to just a few glib words on social media, I can imagine that this three-page account may seem a bit long. We owe it to ourselves and our seniors to take the time to listen to the wisdom of people like Hanno.

Do you want me to start at the beginning? Well, I was born in 1931 in Stuttgart, two years before Hitler came to power. I was seven when the war started, and with that, our lives changed drastically from one day to the

next. A deep gloom hung over everything. Immediately there were no more streetlights and if any light escaped through our windows, we were fined. Of course, my father was drafted literally on the first day of the war, and my brother, senior to me by seven years, also had to go as soon as he had turned sixteen. He ended up in one of the worst battles of the war namely in Stalingrad, where 150 000 Russians and 100 000 Germans were slaughtered.

Meanwhile, my mother and I spent many terrifying nights alone in our cellar, and one night our house was badly damaged from a bomb that hit our neighbours house full on. The evening preceding this event, my mother and I had gone for a walk and admired the first blossoms on a beautiful plum tree in our neighbour's garden. By morning, of course, there was no trace of this tree left, which made the event even more poignant for me. By this time, my mother decided that we could no longer stay in the city. Through connections and sheer luck, she found us two rooms in the attic of the street cleaner's house in a little town in the Black Forest.

This man and his wife were a blessing to us. They had two cows and a goat in the basement, of the house in which they lived and in which we occupied now the attic. We had neither kitchen nor inside bathroom, but we considered ourselves very lucky to find this refuge which for a while offered safety, until the war got even more intense, and we were plagued with dive bombers all day long. It got to the point where I was too scared to fully undress and When a neighbour invited us to have a bath at her house, I would only consent if it was on a rainy or snowy day when the dive bombers could not operate. Still, unlike most Germans we were never hungry, thanks to the cows, goat, chickens and a wonderful vegetable garden which the farmer's wife kept year-round in perfect condition. I should mention that the cows were fed all summer long from the grass that grew on the sides of the streets and on the railway embankment which of course the street cleaner had to cut as part of his job. In the evening I was allowed to lead the cows who had to pull their food home in a wagon.

Then in April 1945, a retreating unit of the German Army was literally running through our town. All night long. I saw only very young boys and old men, presumably the rest of the men had been killed. After all we knew and had known through the war, it was only a matter of time until we would be utterly destroyed thanks to the hubris of



dictator who, to our shame and regret, we had voted in! Then a few hours later, we saw the soldiers of the victorious French Army come down the hill with open bayonets. It was all very scary, but at least nobody shot at us anymore.

Meanwhile my father had to flee from a German Army hospital where he worked in the administration. He finally was taken prisoner by the Americans and immediately released because the war had ended. It took him six weeks to walk home and we barely recognized the bearded man that one day approached our little house.

By the fall of 1945 we managed to get back to Stuttgart and to my great joy we could finally go to school again. I went to a state-run high school which took its guiding pedagogical method from Greek Humanism. Without books and very little paper, we managed to learn a lot due to the excellent teaching from our old teachers, old since they had come back from retirement because younger teachers were scarce. Many of them had been killed and other could not teach because they were considered "Nazies."

I consider that our education was excellent, because our teachers did not just stuff facts into our heads; instead, they managed to light a spark in our souls to ask the deeper questions about life: What had caused this war, why is there cruelty in the world, what do we owe our fellow men, how could we ever live with the fact of the holocaust, especially knowing that our parents' generation by not resisting while resistance was still possible had it allowed to happen. There, I first came about such ideas as Social Justice, service to society and the responsibility each citizen has to participate in the politic life of the state. Since we had no schoolbooks, we read in the works of the great thinkers from Homer, Socrates, to Dante Goethe and the French Expressionists and many in between.

These happy years of hope for a possible better world came to a halt when the Korean War broke out. I was devastated: how could we start another war only five years after the horror we just went through had ended? I also felt personally threatened, because the Allied forces told us that there was a great likelihood that what played out in Korea would also happen in Central Europe. I simply could not bear the thought of more bombs, more cruelty and suffering. It was then that I first had thoughts of fleeing from Europe.

Whether I would end up in Australia, or New Zealand or wherever, I knew I had to learn English fluently. After finishing grade 13, I managed to get a job in England. I stayed there for a year learning a lot, and also feeling discrimination because of my nationality. After all, the war was still in very active memory and we Germans were the "arch villains". And bearing the collective guilt of the holocaust, I understood why I was ostracized! I met a young Canadian who I would eventually marry. Eventually we went to Canada together after spending time in Germany to learn the language and to get a feeling for the culture.



Hanno preparing for a (pre-pandemic) Climate March with local elementary school children



My life in Canada was challenging but by and large satisfying. Because of my background I had to become an activist and I joined the voice of women. The first major target of my activism was the Atom Bomb. How this bomb could actually have been dropped confirmed my worst fears about humanity. How could we do this knowing that in a split-second, thousands upon thousands of our fellow human beings would perish, some immediately, some in slow agony!

Next came the Vietnam war and I was involved helping war resisters to come to Canada, and of course we marched in demonstrations to vent our outrage. Then came the war in Iraq and finally the threat to our planet through human caused climate change took centre stage in my life. Ever since I had read Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring" in 1962, I knew that we had lost our way and that we had to change our way of life. Starting in the 16th century with colonialism the European nations, intoxicated with all their new knowledge and technology, felt that they were superior to all other life. Whatever antiquity, Stoicism and Christianity had taught us was forgotten. We humans devoted ourselves to exploiting other peoples and their lands and resources. Gradually greed was declared a virtue, we now catered not to everybody's need but to everybody's greed! Of course, there always were some sane people around to warn us and to try to bring us back to sanity. They saw the inevitable result of so much hubris and injustice. Alas, greed won, and nature who has sustained us for millennia is hurting. We Homo Sapiens have dug our own grave by becoming totally out of balance with nature and falling into complete egocentricity. If only we could have listened to our First Nations who knew how to be humble as one of many species that make

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- Hanno Pinder

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And now what to do at the present moment? It is late in the day and time is running out- yet, as we now see in Glasgow, our leaders are not yet willing or are not able to call a full stop. It is up to the people to keep demanding a lifestyle that is sustainable and will allow future generations to live on this planet. It is not going to be easy; ingrained habits die slowly, and we are short of time. I think that the change will take part in more and more people's conscience, repentance will be followed by action. Any action is important.

Starting from recycling carefully, taking our plastic bags to our new "Green Depot" at our community centre. It helps to turn off the lights, not using our computer unnecessarily (particularly sending photographs or videos uses lots of energy). Saving hot water, or even any water is beneficial. Knowing how much livestock, particularly cows, contribute to climate change should make us consider eating much less meat. Also let's try to eat less fish because our oceans are becoming depleted as well.

As an activist, I support any action that aims to stop governments from increasing our greenhouse gas emissions. Especially Trudeau's Transmountain pipeline (TMX) is a disaster destined to ruin the Salish Sea and to put Simon Fraser University and surroundings in great danger because it is so close to the tank farm that will store the bitumen. Some of those tanks are over 40 years old and therefore not earthquake safe.



With this in mind, I joined the resistance. I walked to the original tree house which was built near the Brunette River by Dr. Tim Takaro, a public health physician at Simon Fraser University in order to save the 3000 trees that were slated to be felled (and have been felled by now). This treehouse was destroyed by the Trans Mountain crews on the 10th of December 2020. But the very next day, a young French Canadian called Timothe Govare had already occupied a new tree house located about a mile away from the first treehouse and regularly patrolled by TMX security guards. A group of us visited him in early January and brought him some warm food. It was then that I promised to make him a warm meal every Wednesday and make sure that it would be delivered. This I did until he was arrested in early October.

A wonderful side story is the role the hummingbirds played in the long delay of his arrest. Early in the spring, a birder came into this wooded area on tour offered by the protesters managed to get a rare photo of a hummingbird nest. Since breeding hummingbirds are protected under Canadian law all tree cutting had to stop until the end of the breeding season which is the end of August.

Immediately after this hummingbird breeding season deadline, the cutting started and was completed with the arrest of Timothe and the destruction of his treehouse and tree. We protesters believe that every delay is a victory, and that time is on our side. A swelling of protests is already occurring and the more protest the greater the chance of a cancellation of this unfortunate pipeline.

One more group is worth mentioning. Long before the pandemic, a wonderful Quaker woman organized a prayer and meditation circle that met once a month, rain or shine, near the entrance to the TMX property on Burnaby Mountain, close to the watch house which was built by the Tsleil Waututh Nation in protest to the threatening invasion by the pipeline. I joined this group of inter-religious non-violent protesters on many occasions and found it very helpful in examining my intentions and strengthening my resolve. Many members of the circle have since been arrested.

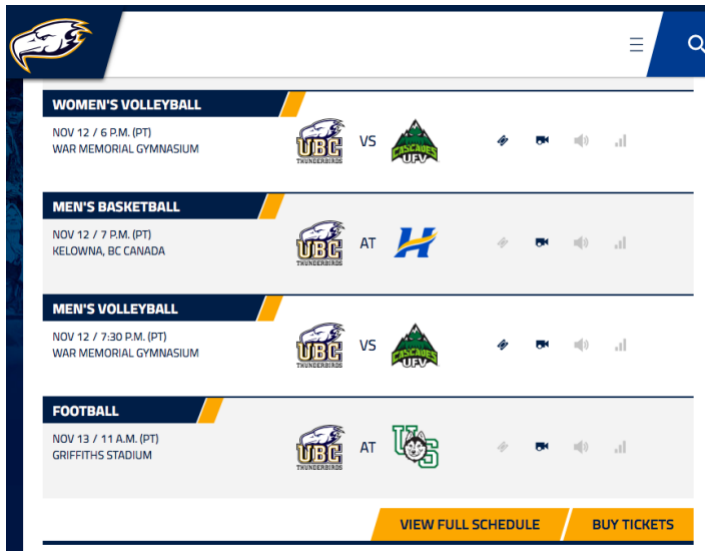
And this brings us to the fate of our future. My prayer and my belief is that more and more citizens will awaken to the crisis, especially after having experienced the heat dome last June and the devastating wild fires. The young generation whose future will be severely impacted by our action or inaction will, under the leadership of Greta Thunberg or similar leaders, demand the necessary action. It will not be easy to change course, and on the way lie many dangers. Let's hope it will stay respectful and non-violent, never motivated by anything but the love for our fellow citizen, our children and the healing of our planet.

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- Hanno Pinder



Free Access to UBC Varsity Sports Games



One of the (many!) things I love about living in our corner of the region is the access to great live sports events.

This year, UBC has secured sponsorships to help cover the costs of spectators at varsity athletic events, so we can attend many sporting events for free! This is a wonderful opportunity to expose children to homegrown athletic excellence and sportsmanship, while enjoying live entertainment close to home, and cheering on our athletes who pour hours and hours into their training, while pursuing academic degrees at UBC.

Click [here](#) to find out more about upcoming games. Volleyball, basketball and hockey are all just starting up!

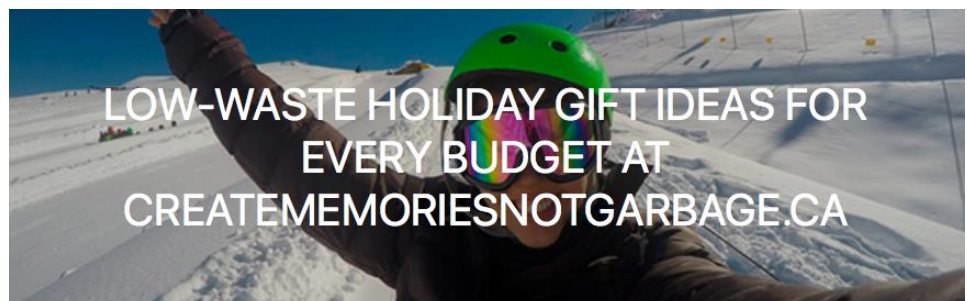
Consider attending a UBC varsity game this year – tickets are free!

<https://gothunderbirds.ca/>

Create Memories Not Garbage

As you may have heard, there have been warnings about potential shortages in holiday gifts this year as a result of supply chain delays. One solution is to make all your purchases early (a plan online retail giants surely hope you'll embrace) but a potentially better option to get creative about gifts that decrease consumption and waste and focus instead on sharing experiences. Once again this year, Metro Vancouver has launched its annual holiday waste campaign is back with over 200 gift and wrapping ideas, plus a guide for recycling shipping materials.

What do a treasure hunt, tickets to a food tasting event and passes to a yoga class all have in common? They are all memorable experiences that can double as low-waste gifts this holiday season!



Now in its 11th year, Create Memories Not Garbage encourages everyone to make environmentally friendly choices when gift-giving, like giving experiences or gifts that are made to last.

Check out the [Merry Memory Maker app](#) for more than 200 low-waste gift ideas sorted by price range.



Also browse ideas for alternatives to single-use wrapping paper, such as fabrics, old maps and calendars, or even clay pots. Get inspired at creatememoriesnotgarbage.ca — ‘yule’ be glad you did!

<https://mvupdate.metrovanancouver.org/issue-77/low-waste-holiday-gift-ideas-for-every-budget-at-creatememoriesnotgarbage-ca/>

Coffee Talk at the Old Barn

Did you know that the Old Barn Community Centre is open again, and staff are very much looking forward to welcoming residents back. In addition to the gym and other community spaces being open again, programming is up and running. One interesting upcoming series of events that will begin in early December is “Coffee Talk.”

Drop by the Old Barn Living Room for a chance to talk to UNA staff and connect with your neighbours around topics that are relevant to our community. The inaugural session will be held on Dec 3 from 10:00 to 11:00 am at the Old Barn. This first session will focus on Winter activities and events (general winter events in and around Vancouver, not just UNA events). Everyone is welcome! Light refreshments will be served. Registration is not required. This event is hosted by Linda Quamme (UNA Old Barn and Volunteer Coordinator) and Vicente Regis (Safe and Connected Community Coordinator).



Linda Quamme (UNA Old Barn and Volunteer Coordinator) and Vicente Regis (Safe and Connected Community Coordinator) will be hosting the Coffee Talk series at the Old Barn

TransLink Updates



Tap In To win!

As of November 1st, TransLink customers can be eligible to win amazing prizes with the tap of their compass card! TransLink launched its first ever sweepstakes to thank customers, help boost economic recovery, and rebuild ridership. Upon registration, customers are eligible for monthly prize draws which run for the next five months. Prizes include 2 e-bikes, 5 one-year Compass Cards, 15 stay-and-play packages

including hotels, restaurants, and attractions, and more! [Register and find out more on the Tap In To Win page](#)



Free WiFi on TransLink Vehicles

Earlier this month, TransLink and Shaw Communications launched free WiFi for customers on six Rapidbuses, on three SkyTrains, at Edmonds Station in Burnaby, and at Carvolth Exchange in Langley. This is the beginning of a system-wide rollout that will provide free WiFi for customers on all buses, SeaBuses, SkyTrains, transit station, and major transit hubs. TransLink expects the rollout of WiFi to be complete in 2026. [Visit TransLink's WiFi webpage](#)



HandyDART Discounts



As of October 1, HandyDART customers can now benefit from age-based discounts and contactless payment through Compass Cards and Tap to Pay. These improvements are a result of the HandyDART Modernization Program, and will make HandyDART more equitable with the conventional transit system while simplifying use and payment through Compass. These improvements will reduce costs for HandyDART customers aged 65 and older, and for customers between the ages of 13 and 18.

[Register at TransLink's HandyDART webpage](#)

UNA Board Elections Happening this November

If you live within the UNA neighbourhoods, you have an election coming up next month. Seven candidates will be elected to the UNA Board. According to the UNA bylaws, a maximum of three candidates per UNA neighbourhood can be elected.

The elections will run from November 8 through 30, 2021. All UNA members (age 18 and older) can vote in this election and will receive an elections package in the mail. This package will contain their ballots and information on how to vote. Results of the election will be posted on the UNA website and will be emailed to residents on November 30. <https://www.myuna.ca/elections/>





There will be a virtual All Candidates forum on November 18 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. This is a great time to get to know the candidates better, so that you can determine who you think will best represent your priorities for the community. You can read more about each candidate on the UNA website [here](#).

If you are a UNA resident, please make sure that you are registered with the UNA to vote. You can find out more (including how to contact UNA staff for more information) at <https://myuna.ca/elections/>. Ballots should be arriving in our mailboxes in the coming days and you can drop off or mail in your ballot between November 8 and 30. Good luck, candidates, and thank you for stepping up to serve our community.

Redistribution of Surplus Food: Foodmesh



If food waste were measured as a country, it would be the world's third-worst emitter of greenhouse gases, after the US and China. Food waste is an enormous problem and one we need to take action against.

Metro Vancouver has provided Vancouver-based food recovery experts FoodMesh with funding to significantly grow the network in the region and use its existing programs and services to help organizations quickly and easily divert their surplus food to organizations that can put that food to its highest-end use. It is something businesses and organization can join, either as food providers or as recipients. The goal is to collect and distribute surplus food to people, or failing that, to agriculture.

This work is supporting Metro Vancouver's [Board Strategic Plan](#) vision to embrace collaboration and innovation in providing sustainable regional services that contribute to a livable and resilient region and a healthy natural environment.

<https://foodmesh.ca/what-we-do/regional-food-recovery-networks/the-metro-vancouver-regional-food-recovery-network/>

Liquid Waste Management Plan: Add your Voice

Opportunities are now open for you to comment on Metro Vancouver's new Liquid Waste Management Plan. How we manage and treat this wastewater, along with stormwater from rain and melting snow, plays an important role in protecting our public health and environment — including the oceans, rivers and streams all around us.

The purpose of this first phase of engagement is to stimulate ideas and gather feedback on the direction for the next iteration of the Liquid Waste Management Plan.

Share your input until November 30, 2021, by:

- Learning more in the [online information boards](#)



Managing our region's wastewater: share your ideas



- Filling out the [online feedback form](#)
- Attending one of two free public webinars:
 - November 9, 2021 6 p.m. PST ([register now](#))
 - November 16, 2021 10 a.m. PST ([register now](#))

<http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/liquid-waste/consultations/lwmp/public-comment/>

How Did Our Air Quality Measure Up this Past Summer?

Metro Vancouver's [air quality management programs](#) have resulted in improvements in regional air quality, however wildfire smoke and ozone advisories in the summer of 2021 indicate that climate change is presenting new challenges for air quality management in the region.



Air quality advisory season suggests challenges ahead for air quality management

A record-breaking heatwave in late June exceeded some climate projections for the region, and resulted in unusually high ozone levels and caused an early start to an extremely active wildfire season in BC. The province experienced an above-average number of wildfires and area burned this summer, which produced considerable smoke across British Columbia, some of which was blown into our region.

During the summer of 2021, Metro Vancouver issued four air quality advisories that were in effect for a total of 10 days. Our region has been impacted by wildfire smoke in five of the previous seven summers.

Climate projections indicate the future holds an increased risk of wildfire activity due to warmer temperatures, smaller snowpack and lower precipitation during the summer. These projections will lead to longer wildfire seasons and an increased likelihood that extreme heatwaves will become more common. You can read more [here](#).

Thrive Month: A Time to Talk About and Support Mental Health

November is Thrive month at UBC, a time when we come together as a community to learn about, discuss and explore ways to support our mental health. Thrive is for everyone, and while looking after our mental health may look and feel different for each of us, we all benefit from maintaining and fostering it.

Maintaining our mental health is a journey that has its up and downs. For me, the last few years have highlighted the importance of nurturing my mental health and wellbeing, especially in light of many structural and systemic



barriers and current global circumstances. These have added complexities to supporting mental health, both for the individual and at a systems level.

Fostering mental health is a daily and year-round pursuit. Thrive is a mindset – it's not necessarily about saying that we should thrive or flourish at all times – instead it's being able to gain the skills and resources to cope and bounce back from life's ups and downs, for ourselves and others.

Research shows that there are five ways that promote and support mental health. These are the Thrive 5: moving more, sleeping soundly, eating well, giving back, and saying hi. The articles this month and Thrive events provide an opportunity to learn about and explore ways that we can support our mental health.

This November, I encourage you to use the Thrive 5+ to explore and learn how to Thrive.

Here are a few ways you can participate in Thrive this year:

- Participate in a Thrive event: with a combination of online and in-person events this year, there are all kinds of ways to participate! Visit the 2021 Thrive calendar here.
- Register your workplace for Not Myself Today, a free online evidence-based platform that provides mental health resources and tools for faculty and staff to reduce stigma, create safe spaces and build awareness.
- Build your mental health literacy with a workshop or training from Workplace Health, Wellbeing and Benefits
- Check in with your colleagues (and yourself). Learn to recognize the signs something might not be right, and know the resources that are available.
- Practice self-care: prioritize your mental health by taking time to move your body between classes or meetings, taking breaks and getting the rest you need.

If you're looking for helpful ideas, check out the Thrive Calendar for a variety of engaging events, activities and experiences happening throughout the month.



Jen's Board and Committee Appointments for 2021

Below are the boards and committees that I serve on. Feel free to reach out to me if you would like to learn more.

- Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) Board of Directors
- TransLink Mayors' Council for Regional Transportation
- Climate Action Committee, MVRD
- Finance and Intergovernmental Committee, MVRD
- Chair of the Electoral Area Committee, MVRD
- Mayors' Committee, MVRD
- E-Comm Board of Directors
- Human Resources Committee, E-Comm
- Fraser Valley Regional Library Board of Directors
- Joint Regional Planning Committee for TransLink
- Inaugural Board Member for Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre (ZEIC)
- Ocean Watch Action Committee



Links & Connections

[Jen McCutcheon's Website](http://www.areaajen.ca)

www.areaajen.ca

[Jen McCutcheon's Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAJen)

www.facebook.com/AreaAJen

[Metro Vancouver](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

www.metrovancouver.org

[Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation](http://www.translink.ca)

www.translink.ca