

A RESOURCE FOR BUSINESSES



Business Link
Media Group

VOL. 47
FEBRUARY

ISSUE 02
2024

04 *RACISM IS A RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM*

11 *THE LEGAL ODYSSEY: A CONVERSATION
WITH REEM NOOR AL-ZADJALI*

26 *FROM PIONEERS TO PROGRESS
THE STRUGGLE FOR BLACK REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS*

FEBRUARY EDITION:

Embracing Diversity for Equity in Business



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Dear readers,

In this month's issue of Business Link, we delve into the theme of embracing diversity for equity in business. From exploring the impact of racism as a relationship problem to discussing the legal odyssey and conversations with community leaders, our publication aims to shed light on the importance of fostering diversity and equity in the business world.

The feature "Racism is A Relationship Problem" by Julie Christiansen delves into the societal impact of racism and its implications for relationships and communities. This thought-provoking article sheds light on the systemic nature of racism and its effects on individuals and society as a whole.

Additionally, we cover stories such as "Hamilton's Port Lands Welcomes Canada's Largest Sugar Refinery" and "A Portrait of Small Business in Canada," which highlight the achievements and contributions of diverse businesses in Canada. These articles underscore the significance of diversity in driving economic growth and innovation.

As we navigate through this issue, we hope to inspire our readers to champion diversity, equity and inclusion in their business endeavors. We believe that by embracing diversity, businesses can foster a more inclusive and equitable environment, thereby driving meaningful change in the corporate landscape.

Stay tuned for more insightful content that celebrates diversity and promotes equity in business.

Yours in Business
Marilyn Tian, M.B.A
President & Co-Publisher
Business Link Media Group



CONTENTS

Racism is A Relationship Problem	04
OpenAI Launches ChatGPT App for Apple	07
Cogeco Invests in Niagara Regional Broadband	09
The Legal Odyssey: A Conversation with Reem Noor Al-Zadjali	11
Hamilton's Port Lands Welcomes Canada's Largest Sugar Refinery	15
A Portrait of Small Business in Canada	17
Blockchain Technology and Bitcoin Explained for Beginners	19
Prime Minister Trudeau Condemns Bell Media Layoffs	20
February News Highlights	21
Future Community Leaders	24
From Pioneers to Progress	26
How to Prevent & Treat Colds & Flu By Huberman Lab	28

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CIRCULATION

The Business Link is published 12 times per year and distributed digitally to businesses in Niagara Region and beyond.

SUBSCRIPTION

You can subscribe to our monthly digital publication by sending us an email, or by following our social media channels!

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www.businesslinkmedia.com

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Racism is A Relationship Problem

By Julie A. Christianse

My family immigrated to Canada from Jamaica when I was six years old. I was already reading at a grade two or three level; however, because it was the seventies and mass immigration was still new to Canada and because I spoke with an accent, it was decided I must also think with an accent, and I was placed in kindergarten instead of a level representing my intelligence and performance. This was the first of many micro- and macro-aggressions I encountered as a young Black child in Canada. Over the years I have matured, married, raised a family, and founded two businesses, and it remains a wonder how deeply systemic racism and signs of inequality permeate almost every system of government, community, and personal bias.

In the world of business, it looks like being overqualified for employment roles and still being overlooked for someone with fewer qualifications or less experience. It looks like gasps of shock when a Black woman with the last name, Christiansen walks into a room, when people were expecting a leggy blonde with blue eyes. It looks like people attempting to minimize their own behaviours by saying things like, "I have a Black friend..." It looks like having to meet a higher threshold for borrowing. It sounds like people reacting in open surprise when they learn that a person of colour owns the business.

Listen, I'm not angry! Truly. Part of why I am so fascinated with anger (both for the small hassles and the big, life-altering problems of the world) is because resolving it is so simple, but so much of the world's systems have been conditioned for millennia to categorize groups of people as "more" or "less-than". I believe that every problem at its heart is a relationship problem. Racism is a relationship problem. Refusing to see one's fellow humans as equal – at least in their humanity – is a relationship problem that will invariably result in anger on the part of the ones who are being marginalized. It will also contribute to anger of the oppressor when people fight for their rights to equality and inclusion.

You may wonder why I did not include the word, "diversity" above. That's simple. Everywhere you look, there is diversity. In 80% of work environments, diversity is not the problem. Inclusion. Equality. Fairness. Belonging. That, my friends, is the crux of the relationship problem. Consider the widespread trend of hiring persons of colour to spearhead DEI initiatives in the wake of George Floyd's murder in 2020. Since the upsurge of hiring DEI coordinators, many of those hires have resigned or they have been fired from their roles because it was a token position, created without any real intent to facilitated radical, positive, lasting change within the organizations. There was never an intent to build bridges or to strengthen relationships.



For business owners who are committed to ensuring their culture is one of openness, fairness, equity, and inclusion, here are some strategies to ensure that your team understands and embraces your commitment.

- 1. Throw your support behind DEI initiatives.** Show up. Encourage the team to do the same. Acknowledge when stories in the news might be disturbing or upsetting for your teams (e.g., the Ulvade school shooting or the Buffalo shooting). Check in with people and see if they're okay. They don't need memos or grand statements – they just need to know that you genuinely care.
- 2. Resist the urge to be performative.** DEI is more than the photo opportunity with your token Black employee so you can look good in social media during Black History Month. Hire and promote according to talent, education, experience, and qualifications.

Check your own unconscious biases. Resist the urge to reject the candidates that don't look or sound like you, just because...

3. Do your own research so that you are more aware of the signs of systemic racism in your workplace. Trust me, they exist! What you do not know is that targets of racism tire of having to explain why touching their hair, or commenting on their accent, saying your tan matches their skin, or speaking more loudly because they didn't understand what you said the first time is a microaggression.

4. Remember that DEI isn't about making everyone the same. DEI is about recognizing and celebrating our differences, not denying them. DEI is about understanding that by bringing different perspectives to the table, we can be more innovative, more agile, more successful in business. Remember that diversity is all around us – we can choose to embrace or reject it.

5. Finally, be consistent and genuine in your interactions with your team. Uncover your unconscious biases and do the work to grow beyond the deeply rooted ideas that contribute to racism.

Here are three books you should read if you would like to better understand the value and importance of DEI and building trusting relationships in your business:

1. I'm Not Yelling: A Black Woman's Guide to Navigating the Workplace
2. How to be an Anti-Racist
3. The Rise of Rage: Harnessing the Most Misunderstood Emotion

Diversity is all around us. We have a shared responsibility to do the work of dismantling systemic racism and creating a world that embraces rather than fears our differences. It begins with you and me. It is possible to create an inclusive culture one relationship at a time.

Author bio:

Julie A. Christiansen is an internationally recognized public speaker, author, and a registered psychotherapist. Julie's passion is to leverage people into radical, positive, lasting change by teaching them the art of courageous communication and helping them to rehab their relationships.

Julie's newest book, *The Rise of Rage* takes on the herculean task of unpacking the truths about anger and how to resolve it.

<https://www.angersolution.com/the-rise-of-rage>





OpenAI Launches ChatGPT App for Apple Vision Pro Revolutionizing Human-AI Interaction

OpenAI, renowned for pioneering cutting-edge artificial intelligence models, has unveiled a groundbreaking ChatGPT app tailored for Apple Vision Pro, the innovative augmented reality headset introduced by Apple last month.

Enabling users to engage with OpenAI's state-of-the-art GPT-4 Turbo model, the ChatGPT app on Vision Pro facilitates seamless interaction through natural language processing. From querying information to seeking advice and even generating text and images directly within the app, users can experience a glimpse of the future of human-AI interaction, characterized by enhanced naturalness, intuition, and immersion.

The release of ChatGPT for Vision Pro signifies a significant achievement for OpenAI in its quest to develop AI for societal advancement. It offers a sneak peek into the evolving landscape of human-AI engagement, envisioning a future where individuals effortlessly communicate their needs to AI assistants via speech and visual inputs, potentially revolutionizing problem-solving dynamics.

Emerging as one of the pioneering apps for visionOS, the operating system powering Apple Vision Pro, ChatGPT joins a roster of over 600 innovative applications designed to deliver an immersive digital experience in the physical realm. Harnessing the capabilities of Vision Pro's features like Optic ID, Spatial Audio, and VisionKit, visionOS apps aim to redefine user interaction by leveraging cutting-edge technologies.



While specifics regarding ChatGPT's utilization of Vision Pro's advanced features remain undisclosed, the app aligns with the industry's broader movement toward multimodal AI. This paradigm shift enables AI systems to comprehend diverse inputs encompassing text, speech, images, and videos, enhancing versatility and adaptability across varied contexts.

ChatGPT's existing capabilities in processing text, images, and voice are poised to seamlessly integrate with Vision Pro, streamlining complex problem-solving scenarios such as diagnostics, meal planning, and mathematical analysis. Users can effortlessly generate content by describing concepts to ChatGPT or by presenting real-world objects to the headset, further enhancing intuitive interaction.

Available for free on visionOS starting today, ChatGPT also offers an optional subscription for ChatGPT Plus, granting access to advanced GPT-4 features and expedited response times. The app can be accessed via the visionOS App Store, alongside a diverse array of specialized applications tailored to diverse interests and needs.

VentureBeat has reached out to OpenAI for further insights into the development of the ChatGPT app for Vision Pro, and updates will be provided accordingly.

Article Source: <https://venturebeat.com/ai/openai-launches-chatgpt-app-for-apple-vision-pro/>



Cogeco Invests in Niagara Regional Broadband Network

Monday, February 5, 2024

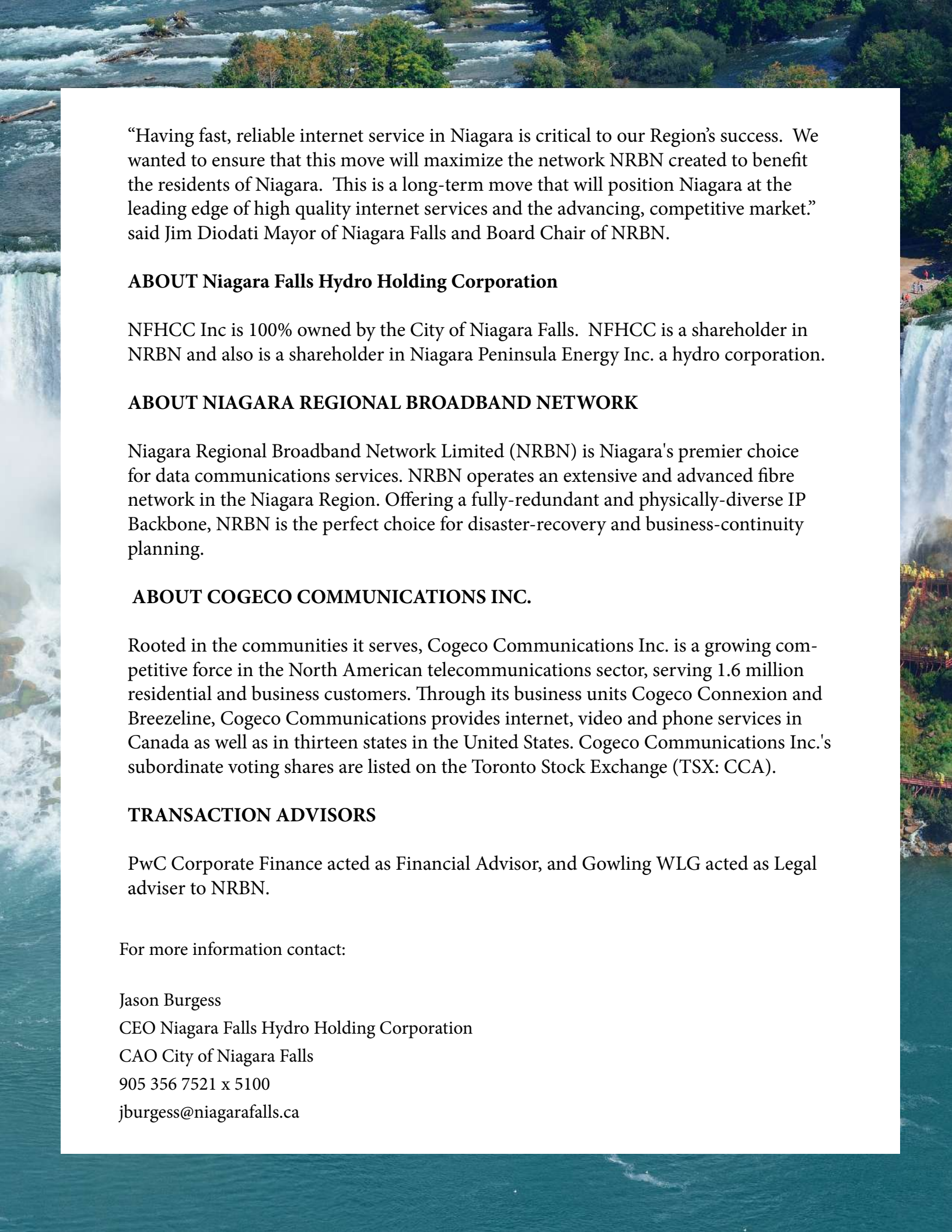
Niagara Falls Hydro Holding Corporation (NFHHC) and Energy Services Niagara Inc (ESNI) jointly announced today with Cogeco Communications Inc. (TSX: CCA) that Cogeco Connexion is acquiring Niagara Regional Broadband Network (NRBN), a Niagara based internet, telephone and television service provider. NFHHC is a company owned by the City of Niagara Falls. ESNI is a company owned by the Town of Niagara on the Lake. NRBN was jointly owned by NFHHC (75%) and ESNI (25%). NFHHC and ESNI will continue to hold a minority stake in NRBN after the conclusion of the transaction.

NRBN was originally developed to bring high-speed internet services to Niagara. NRBN has created a strong niche presence in the Municipal, University, School Board, College and Hospital (MUSH) sector as well as a strong commercial base. NRBN will continue to play a critical role in ensuring high speed access in Niagara. In addition, Cogeco commits to continue investing in its broadband networks in the Region.

QUOTES:

“We are delighted to welcome NRBN to the Cogeco family,” said Philippe Jetté, President and Chief Executive Officer of Cogeco Inc. and Cogeco Communications Inc. “Bolstered by the core values that we share, we look forward to enhancing and expanding the services we offer to businesses and residents of the Niagara Region. NRBN is a local provider like us, we’ve acquired them to take their business to the next level and contribute even more to the local economy.”

“We have a strong commitment to the Niagara community through investing in our fibre-powered network, hiring locally, providing local programming on YourTV, and supporting local charities and community events. We are proud to continue our mission with NRBN to connect residents, businesses, and institutions to high-speed Internet that is locally served,” said Frédéric Perron, President of Cogeco Connexion.



“Having fast, reliable internet service in Niagara is critical to our Region’s success. We wanted to ensure that this move will maximize the network NRBN created to benefit the residents of Niagara. This is a long-term move that will position Niagara at the leading edge of high quality internet services and the advancing, competitive market.” said Jim Diodati Mayor of Niagara Falls and Board Chair of NRBN.

ABOUT Niagara Falls Hydro Holding Corporation

NFHCC Inc is 100% owned by the City of Niagara Falls. NFHCC is a shareholder in NRBN and also is a shareholder in Niagara Peninsula Energy Inc. a hydro corporation.

ABOUT NIAGARA REGIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

Niagara Regional Broadband Network Limited (NRBN) is Niagara's premier choice for data communications services. NRBN operates an extensive and advanced fibre network in the Niagara Region. Offering a fully-redundant and physically-diverse IP Backbone, NRBN is the perfect choice for disaster-recovery and business-continuity planning.

ABOUT COGECO COMMUNICATIONS INC.

Rooted in the communities it serves, Cogeco Communications Inc. is a growing competitive force in the North American telecommunications sector, serving 1.6 million residential and business customers. Through its business units Cogeco Connexion and Breezeline, Cogeco Communications provides internet, video and phone services in Canada as well as in thirteen states in the United States. Cogeco Communications Inc.'s subordinate voting shares are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX: CCA).

TRANSACTION ADVISORS

PwC Corporate Finance acted as Financial Advisor, and Gowling WLG acted as Legal adviser to NRBN.

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The Legal Odyssey: A Conversation with Reem Noor Al-Zadjali

By Angelina Li, Amman Jordan

Embarking on a journey through the corridors of legal expertise, I had the privilege of engaging in a candid conversation with Reem Noor Al-Zadjali. As the Founder of Reem Al-Zadjali Lawyers & Legal Consultants and a distinguished graduate from King's College London, her trailblazing career has earned her accolades like 'Most Inspiring People,' 'Woman of the Year,' and 'Icon of the Year.' In this exclusive interview, we delve into the nuances of her legal journey, explore her perspectives on women's rights, and uncover the challenges faced as a female lawyer in Oman. Join us as we unravel the chapters of Reem's legal odyssey and gain insights into the multifaceted world of law through her seasoned perspective.



Angelina: Hi, Reem. My name is Angelina Li, an 11th-grade student currently living in Oman. My interest has always been feminism and I want to pursue a similar career path in the future.

It's finally great to see you again. I've been looking forward to our conversation. Your career has been impressive and inspiring to many. To start our conversation, could you share some key highlights of your legal career, especially the moments that led you to establish your law firm?

Reem: I had a failed partnership when I started and had to restart. This is where I found this place. Conveniently, it's right next to my house. We started with just me and my colleague, and we didn't have any other lawyers or secretaries or anything. Then, we gradually increased and took the other office as well. Hopefully, next year we're going to move to a bigger place.

Angelina: What initially inspired you to pursue a career in law? Because obviously, it's stressful, and you have to do a lot of reading and studying.

Reem: I didn't know it was this stressful. Maybe if I did, I would've thought twice about it before starting. Having a law firm, you need to take care of all the files and clients that you have. You don't need to specialize in one thing or have a license only in one type of law. For example, in England, you have a specialty, like a law firm specialized in family law, criminal law, etc. And they're all specialized, but here, we have everything in general, which is very difficult because you're open to different cases. The most difficult thing I find is being involved in personal cases, not company cases. This is very difficult because you have to understand the person in front of you and their personality. Sometimes they're very negative, wanting to know every single detail, and sometimes when you give them advice, they won't listen.

Angelina: Yeah, that's true. As the author of "Women & Law," you're clearly very proud of your achievement. The book addresses a pretty significant topic that's relevant in modern society. What motivated you to write about this, and what specific key messages do you hope the reader takes away?

Reem: I realized that a lot of women don't know their rights and wanted to do something very simple and readable for everyone to understand, not just lawyers. I had the idea of this book, and at the beginning, I just wanted to specialize it, make it just in family law because usually, family law is where the woman needs to get her rights and the divorce and everything according to Sharia law. After all, it's not like any other country; according to Sharia law, everything is in the hands of the man. I thought I'd just do it on that, but while I was writing it, I realized there are a lot of women who face sexual abuse, physical abuse, etc. So it has to do with criminal law and labor law.

Angelina: Wow. Speaking of family law, it plays an important role in shaping women's rights, especially in Oman. How does Omani family law impact women? And are there usually conflicts or discussions in this area?

Reem: Usually, the first thing I'll hear when a woman comes is that women have no rights. But that's not true. She does, but she just has to handle the case in the right way. A lot of them will go to certain lawyers who are not specialized in it, so they don't get their rights completely because of the lawyer's mistakes and not the law. But I think that women do get their rights. I think there needs to be a lot of changes in the laws, and hopefully, within the coming years, certain articles need to be changed because, yes, there is some discrimination, but I've been using it to my benefit, depending on whose case I'm handling, if it's the man or the woman. But we have been very successful with these cases.

Angelina: Wow. Speaking of family law, it plays an important role in shaping women's rights, especially in Oman. How does Omani family law impact women? And are there usually conflicts or discussions in this area?

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Angelina: Oh, that's not nice to hear; they have to be more confident. So what changes or initiatives do you believe are necessary to promote gender equality in the legal field, both in Oman and globally? We can talk about England as well.

Reem: I don't know if people might take this against me, but with us, I don't think we need equality. But we need to differentiate between equality and nondiscrimination. Nondiscrimination is what we want because I'm looking at its point of view where there is Sharia. And then if we look at the law, there are a lot of benefits for women. So it distinguished between the man and woman for the benefit of the woman. For example, certain work that women cannot do physically like labor work. So this is in our law; these jobs are not to be given to women because physically we cannot take them. Like the labor work and the hardcore job. And for example, there's another article that states that women are not allowed to work after 09:00 p.m. Unless there's an order from the minister. So this is for the benefit of women as well. Another example is that the man is in charge of the family financially, so this is also for the benefit of the woman. Even with the child support and even if she works, he's the one who's in charge financially, not her. Even if she has custody, she doesn't pay anything for the child. He has to pay. So these are a lot of things. After listing all these, do we want equality then? But it's going to be half-half. She gets the benefit of the custody as the first choice of a custodian. It will be shared custody between both. So do we want that equality? No, we don't want to be discriminated against just because we are women. So we want to be treated like them. Like in certain jobs, in choices. For example, in some things where there is discrimination in the laws, there's an article that specifies that if a woman gets married, for example, she might lose custody of the child, but if the man gets married, it's a benefit for him. So here there is discrimination. Certain things need to be changed. But I prefer to say how we look at it from my point of view is for us. We don't want discrimination, and we don't want equality. Because we're not going to be as equal as them. We're the ones that carry the child and take care of the child. Physically, we're different from men.

Angelina: Wow, thank you for sharing this. I've also noticed that you have a lot of lists of awards, and they're all really impressive. Which recognition are you particularly proud of, and how have these awards influenced you?

Reem: I'm very proud of the one I received from A'sayeeda AL Jalila, Sultan Haitham's wife in 2020; I couldn't imagine that I would be recognized there and be chosen by name. So for me, that was a very big thing.

Angelina: That's really impressive. So speaking of being one of the most inspiring people, the icon of the year for two years straight, woman of the month, etc., how do you handle the responsibilities and expectations?

Reem: I feel sometimes I'm overwhelmed. Even receiving the award again, I was in contact with them the last few with another award before, and I told them they should give it to someone else because I've

Angelina: Last but not least, for young individuals aspiring to pursue a career in law or want to be a lawyer in the future, what advice would you offer based on your own experiences and challenges?

Reem: If they're thinking of opening a law firm, they need to have a lot of experience from working at another firm, and it'll take a long time because a lot of the young generation just want to finish the training period and open a firm immediately. I don't think they're ready at that point. And they're not going to grow quickly. They're going to find difficulties getting clients because they're too young; they don't have the experience, they'll have a lot of failures. So preferably they take a long period, at least until they reach the appeal license and then open their own firm. Speciality is very important, and I think in the future, Oman will be looking at that because when you specialize in something, you'll be very good at it. And then you'll be known for that certain type of case, which is better than being general. And you're good at this and this and this and this, but you're not amazing at it. So specialty is also very important. And most important is confidence. But whenever you have a case, you need to study it properly, and that's where your confidence comes in. Confidence will not just come just because you're confident and just going into court, but it has to come from studying the whole case and knowing everything about it 100%. This is where you're going to get there. So it's like having an exam every day.

Angelina: Okay, thank you so much, Reem. I learned a lot from you.



Hamilton's Port Lands Welcomes Canada's Largest Sugar Refinery

In a transformative development for Hamilton's industrial landscape, a new sugar refinery is set to emerge in the city's port lands by 2025, marking a significant stride towards becoming Canada's leading hub for sugar production. The Sucro Can Sourcing facility, poised to sprawl at the foot of Hamilton's Sherman Street North, boasts an awe-inspiring capacity to churn out a staggering 4,000 tonnes of refined sugar per day, equating to a colossal one million tonnes annually.

What sets this venture apart is its symbiotic relationship with the once-polluted Randle Reef, now rejuvenated to serve as an integral component of the refinery's operations. This section of Hamilton's harbor, once plagued by contamination, embarked on a monumental cleanup endeavor in 2016, transforming it into a beacon of environmental reclamation. Its imminent integration into the refinery signifies the culmination of efforts to revitalize and repurpose this once-deteriorated segment, soon to be entrusted under the stewardship of the Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA).

At the heart of this endeavor lies a promise of economic vitality and job creation. With a \$135-million infusion from Sucro Can and HOPA, the refinery is poised to catalyze a ripple effect, projecting a monumental \$1-billion contribution to

Ontario's economy. Ian Hamilton, President and CEO of HOPA, underscored the profound implications of this venture, heralding it as a beacon for agri-food enterprises seeking proximity to one of Canada's premier sugar refineries.

Sucro Can, the visionary force behind this venture, is no stranger to Hamilton's port lands, having operated a smaller-scale refinery adjacent to Collective Arts Brewery. Founder and CEO Jonathan Taylor emphasized the monumental shift this new facility heralds, positioning it as a pivotal enabler for Ontario's burgeoning agri-food sector. With the promise of 50 to 75 new employment opportunities, this venture not only fortifies Hamilton's industrial prowess but also bolsters the region's economic resilience.

As Sucro Can sets its sights on Hamilton's horizon, the company's commitment to sustainability and community welfare remains steadfast. Taylor reassured the public of stringent measures to mitigate environmental impact, underlining the importance of responsible industrial practices in shaping a sustainable future. With meticulous planning and unwavering dedication, Sucro Can's forthcoming refinery promises to redefine Hamilton's industrial landscape, marking a triumphant milestone in the city's storied legacy of industrial innovation and resilience.

Article Source: <https://www-cbc-ca.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.cbc.ca/amp/1.7085718>



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A Portrait of Small Business in Canada: Adaption, Agility, All At Once

Canadian Small Businesses Navigate New Realities Post-Pandemic

The Business Data Lab (BDL) of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has unveiled its latest report, delving into the transformed landscape for small businesses in the aftermath of the pandemic. Titled "A Portrait of Small Business in Canada: Adaption, Agility, All At Once," the report illuminates the challenges and opportunities small businesses face, emphasizing their pivotal role in Canada's economy.

The report underscores that while 98% of Canadian businesses are categorized as small, micro-firms, particularly those with fewer than five employees, dominate the landscape. This spotlight on micro-firms emphasizes the necessity of understanding the intricacies of all small businesses, especially micro-firms, to fortify the resilience of the Canadian economy.

Acknowledging the economic headwinds, including soaring business costs, historic borrowing rates, and heightened pandemic-related debts, the report urges policymakers to consider tailored strategies. The survival of micro-firms is framed as a macroeconomic imperative for Canada.

The study goes beyond aggregate figures, examining the distinct realities, challenges, and opportunities faced by small businesses owned by women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2s+ community members, immigrants, Indigenous peoples, and visible minorities.

Marwa Abdou, Senior Research Director at the Canadian Chamber Business Data Lab, emphasizes the need for actionable data to strategically support small businesses nationwide. Minister of Small Business, Rechie Valdez, expresses gratitude for the study's insights, affirming the importance of understanding the unique experiences of diverse small businesses.





As the economic and technological landscape continues to evolve, the report suggests that both business owners and policymakers must adopt innovative strategies. It calls for agile governmental support that not only provides funding but also aids in managing costs, fostering innovation, and expanding online visibility for small businesses.

Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, interprets the report as a signal to focus on supporting growth, advocating for measures such as reducing red tape, investing in infrastructure, and promoting an innovation economy.

Key findings from the report include the prevalence of micro-firms as the most common business type, immigrants' significant ownership share in private sector businesses, and the necessity for an enticing online commercial presence. The study reveals the increasing adoption of technology by small businesses but stresses the importance of further changes to meet evolving consumer preferences.

In conclusion, the report emphasizes the critical need for a nuanced approach to fortify small businesses across Canada, recognizing them not merely as small entities but as essential contributors to the nation's economic fabric.

Understanding the Difference: Blockchain Technology and Bitcoin Explained for Beginners

By Marilyn Tian, Blockchain in Business Meetup Founder

It's common for people outside the blockchain circle to have a reaction of curiosity or confusion when they first hear about blockchain. This is because blockchain technology is still relatively new to many people, and its potential applications and implications are not widely understood. Through my experience hosting the "Blockchain in Business" meetup workshop and interacting with enthusiasts from around the world, I have encountered similar reactions. This has motivated me to simplify and explain blockchain technology in a way that is accessible to beginners, so they can grasp its significance and potential impact.

Blockchain technology is essentially a digital ledger that records transactions and tracks assets across a network. It is shared and immutable, meaning that once information is recorded, it cannot be altered.

This technology is not limited to just financial transactions; it can be used to record and track any type of asset, tangible or intangible, such as houses, cars, intellectual property, patents, and copyrights.

Bitcoin, on the other hand, is a specific application of blockchain technology. It is a digital currency that operates on a decentralized network using blockchain technology to facilitate peer-to-peer transactions. The transactions are recorded on the blockchain, ensuring transparency and security.

In essence, blockchain technology is the underlying infrastructure that enables the existence of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin. It has the potential for various applications beyond digital currencies, including supply chain management, healthcare, voting systems, and more.

Understanding these concepts can help differentiate between blockchain technology and Bitcoin. If you'd like to explore these topics further, you can refer to the following resources:

- **What is Blockchain Technology? | IBM** (<https://www.ibm.com/topics/blockchain>)
- **What is Blockchain Technology? A Step-by-Step Guide For Beginners** (<https://blockgeeks.com/guides/what-is-blockchain-technology/>)
- **Blockchain Facts: What Is It, How It Works, and How It Can Be Used** (<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/blockchain.asp>)
- **How does Bitcoin work? - Bitcoin** (<https://bitcoin.org/en/how-it-works>)
- **Bitcoin For Dummies Cheat Sheet** (<https://www.dummies.com/article/business-careers-money/personal-finance/cryptocurrency/bitcoin-for-dummies-cheat-sheet-207382/>)

These resources can provide a deeper understanding of the differences between blockchain technology and Bitcoin for beginners.

Welcome to join our "Blockchain in Business" meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/blockchaininbusiness/>

Prime Minister Trudeau Condemns Bell Media Layoffs and Programming Cuts, Calls for Support for Local Journalism

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed his anger over Bell Media's decision to lay off employees and make programming cuts. Trudeau criticized the trend of large corporations buying up radio stations and newspapers, laying off journalists, and then selling off the struggling entities. He argued that this practice is eroding local journalism and Canada's democracy. Bell Media's parent company, BCE Inc., cited declining advertising revenues and operating losses as reasons for the layoffs and programming changes.

Here are the quick facts based on the article:

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed anger over BCE Inc.'s decision to lay off employees at Bell Media, calling it a "garbage decision."
- Bell Media recently announced the end of multiple television newscasts and other programming cuts.
- Trudeau criticized large corporations for buying up radio stations and small community newspapers, laying off journalists, and then selling them off when they become less profitable.
- Bell Media's advertising revenues declined by \$140 million in 2023, and its news division is facing annual operating losses of over \$40 million.
- Trudeau argued that these layoffs are eroding the quality of local journalism and Canada's democracy.
- Bell Media stated that less than 10% of the 4,800 eliminated positions would come from Bell Media, and they plan to replace news correspondent and technician teams with "multi-skilled journalists" in some provinces.
- Experts warn that these layoffs will further deteriorate local newsrooms and lead to less contextual journalism.

Read the full article here: https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/trudeau-says-he-s-furious-over-bell-media-layoffs-calling-it-a-garbage-decision-1.6762883?utm_source=Greater+Niagara+Chamber+of+Commerce+Subscribers&utm_campaign=b327bfc425-DAILY-UPDATE-JANUARY-3_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9d7633c2c-b327bfc425-111622478&mc_cid=b327bfc425&mc_eid=c63e26e953



NEWS

WORLD

World's leaders meet today to discuss global warming and terrorism issues. Among other things will also discuss new measures on global security. Last time this meeting was very productive and has brought major changes on Earth. We will visit several places of strategic interest and will discuss possible collaborations nationally.

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BUSINESS NEWS

ECONOMY • INVESTMENTS • CORPORATION • STOCK EXCHANGE

Economic Growth

The economic situation is growing after the most recent changes are tax system. Last time this meeting was very productive and has brought major changes on Earth. We will visit several places of strategic interest and will discuss possible collaborations nationally.

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FEBRUARY GLOBAL NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

JetBlue Airways Q4 2023: Mixed Results Amidst Challenges and Projections for 2024

JetBlue Airways (\$JBLU) reported a net loss of \$104M in Q4 2023, compared to a \$24M profit the previous year, with an adjusted loss per share of \$0.19, missing Wall Street expectations. Despite a 3.7% YoY decline, Q4 revenue reached \$2.33B, slightly exceeding the estimated \$2.29B and outperforming Wall Street estimates.

More:

- The low-cost airline projects a 5%-9% decline in revenue and a 6% decrease in capacity in the first quarter of 2024.
- According to the airline, capacity will drop to the low single digits in 2024, and adjusted profits may potentially approach breakeven.
- The NYC-based firm reported that seven Airbus jets are grounded for engine inspections due to a Pratt & Whitney production issue, with the potential for this number to reach 15 by year-end.
- Due to rising expenses, operational difficulties, and shifting travel trends, JetBlue is considering buy-outs for a portion of its paid staff.

Article Source: <https://inside.com/business/posts/jetblue-reports-loss-anticipates-reduced-capacity-in-2024-412081>

Pfizer's Q4 2023 Earnings Beat Expectations Amidst Revenue Challenges

Pfizer (\$PFE) surprised with a Q4 2023 profit of \$0.10 per share on an adjusted basis, beating the expected \$0.22 per share loss. The company reported Q4 revenue at \$14.25B, slightly below the estimated \$14.42B, while maintaining its 2024 forecasts for adjusted earnings of \$2.05 to \$2.25 per share and revenue between \$58.5B to \$61.5B.

More:

- The American multinational pharmaceutical and biotechnology corporation made \$12.5B in revenue from COVID-related goods in 2023, which included the Comirnaty vaccine and the antiviral medication Paxlovid.
- The sales of breast cancer treatment, Ibrance, dropped 12.6% to \$1.12B, missing the \$1.23B estimate, and revenue from the Prevnar pneumonia vaccine was \$1.61B, below the expected \$2B.
- The NYC-based business has started an internal reorganization and \$4B cost-cutting program in response to the purchase of Seagen and issues with its non-COVID performance.
- Pfizer slashed research and development spending by 22% to \$2.82B in the quarter, driven by reduced com-

Article Source: <https://inside.com/business/posts/pfizer-s-q4-profit-surprise-key-products-sales-miss-412080>

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HIGHLIGHTS

Meta AI Unveils Code Llama 70B: A Groundbreaking Open-Source AI Model Revolutionizing Code Generation

Meta AI has launched Code Llama 70B, an expansive open-source AI model designed for code generation, capable of writing in Python, C++, Java, and PHP. With 175 billion parameters, this enhanced version of Llama 2 is trained on 500 billion tokens, offering an extended context window of 100,000 tokens for processing complex code structures.

More:

- CodeLlama-70B-Instruct variant scored 67.8 on HumanEval, surpassing prior open models and rivaling closed models like GPT-4 and Gemini Pro.
- CodeLlama-70B-Instruct excels at understanding natural language instructions and generating code for tasks like sorting, searching, and algorithm implementation.
- Another variant, CodeLlama-70B-Python, is designed for Python, leveraging 100 billion tokens of Python code to enhance its fluency and accuracy in generating it.
- Under the same license as Llama 2, Code Llama 70B can be downloaded for free by commercial and research users.
- The release will greatly impact code generation and software development, offering a powerful tool for code creation and improvement with the potential for new applications.

Article Source: <https://inside.com/ai/posts/meta-launches-open-source-code-llama-70b-for-ai-development-412016>

Future Community Leaders Zoom in on Systems, Influencing and Change

By Julie Grecco

The spotlight was on Navigating and Influencing Community Systems as Leadership Niagara's Class of 2023-2024 resumed their participation in the Community Leadership Development program for the new year.

On January 19, Learning Day 3 drew participants – professionals from across Niagara – to Niagara Health's Weiland site where they had an opportunity to hear from two guest presenters.

Nature-centered leadership coach Alison Braithwaite led a thought-provoking presentation on Exploring Systems. Key takeaways included: everything is interconnected; systems thinking is about relationships; a simple change has ripple effects; systems become integrated into our identities; and how we have a responsibility to understand our interrelatedness as well as biases/ mental models.

Niagara Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Advisor Jeffrey Sinclair discussed Creating Sustainable and Transformative Change. He guided participants through the basics of collective impact and the levers of systems change using an interactive discussion and examples related to homelessness.

The Learning Day continued virtually on February 2 with a presentation on Crucial Conversations. Dr. Andrew Rutledge discussed how to identify crucial conversations (those with opposing views, strong emotions and high stakes), which are key to organizational, team and interpersonal success. He offered tools on how to return to healthy dialogue.



“Our stories create or emotions; we create our stories,” said Rutledge.

In a Crucial Influencer presentation, Organizational Development Consultant Julie Campbell introduced a six-source model activity to diagnose barriers to vital behaviours and what could be done to reverse them.

Program Advisory Committee member Michelle Ross led an engaging influencing activity based on the four TetraMap elements (fire, earth, water or air). Participants completed a TetraMap assessment at the beginning of the program last fall and their personal results were revealed.

Leadership Niagara has worked to develop community-minded leaders since 2007. The current cohort began their leadership journey in October with a focus on developing the skills and competencies required to be Inspiring Leaders – Building Community.

Over the course of the program, participants will complete a series of in-person and virtual workshops and interact with numerous Niagara leaders. They also have an opportunity to give back to the community through ongoing project teamwork in support of a local community group in addressing a challenge in their organization.

Julie Grecco, Sheldon King, Jeff Sinclair (presenter), Michelle Ross, Karen Ogidigben



From Pioneers to Progress

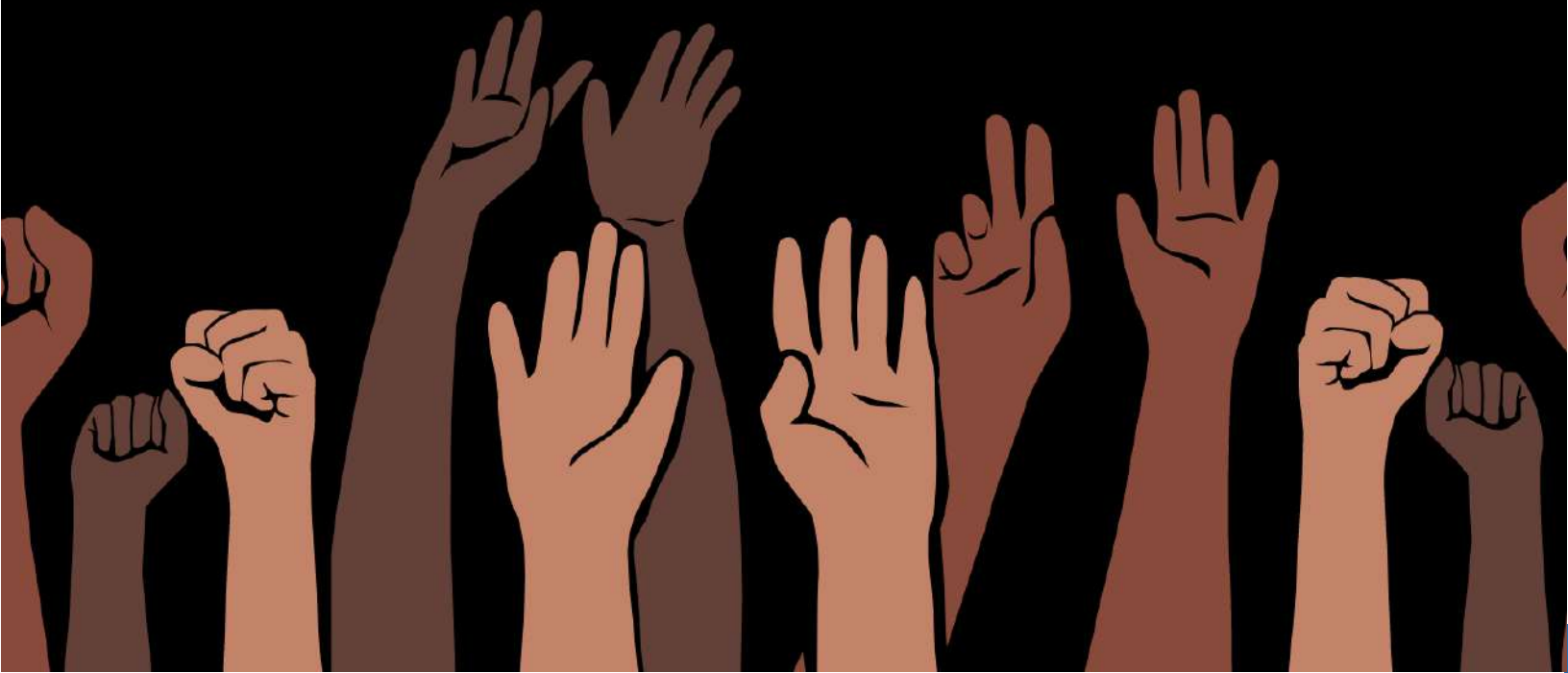
The Struggle For Black Representation in Politics


By Ryan Li, Vancouver Meetup Founder

During Black History Month, we reflect on the struggles and accomplishments of Black Canadians and their allies who've fought to make Canada a welcoming home for all. From a legislative standpoint, one of the greatest breakthroughs in terms of racial equality has been the recent rise of Black participation in politics, leading to more diverse representatives, holistic and inclusive policies, and urgency in addressing issues that disproportionately affect the BIPOC community. This rapid change is the culmination of centuries of advocacy, and while great strides have been made, there is still more work to be done. While substantial barriers to Black participation in politics remain, many organizations have taken up the fight to make politics more inclusive, carrying forward the centuries-old struggle for equality.

Black Canadians weren't always welcome in the halls of power. While Black males gained the right to vote with the British Empire's abolition of slavery in 1834, discrimination, public pressure, and the refusal of parties to endorse Black candidates meant that no legislature in the country – neither provincial nor federal – sat a Black representative until 129 years after slavery's end.

This all changed in 1963 when Leonard Braithwaite was elected to Queen's Park, becoming the first Black MPP in Ontario's history. Five years later, Hamilton's Lincoln Alexander was elected to the House of Commons, breaking the colour barrier in federal politics. With these two monumental victories, Black Canadians began slowly making their way into politics and have made large progress for Black representation ever since.





Today, six out of Ontario's 124 MPPs are Black, comprising just under 5% of the entire chamber. What's more, however, is that the current parliamentary term marked the first time that Black MPPs sat in both the government and opposition benches, symbolizing a significant advancement towards a more representative and inclusive political landscape, where Black voices are heard on both sides of the house and implemented into both government and opposition platforms.

Meanwhile, in Ottawa, MPs elected the first Black speaker of the House of Commons last October, increasing the visibility of Black role models and further breaking down glass ceilings and discriminatory stereotypes about people of colour in politics. While the House has a long way to go regarding Black representation, featuring only eight Black MPs out of 338 seats, there is widespread hope that such moves will keep the ball rolling and encourage more diverse participation in policymaking.

The greatest supporters of this push are non-partisan organizations such as Operation Black Vote Canada (OBVC), which work with political parties to increase the number of Black candidates, boost political literacy among Black Canadians, and lobby for inclusive legislation. Through these actions, groups such as OBVC hope to not only inspire current voters to exercise their democratic rights or even run for office, but to engrain a culture of voting and political literacy among the next generation. The goal? To create a multicultural and welcoming Canada where all backgrounds and views are represented at the decision-making table.

From the pioneering victories of Braithwaite and Alexander to today, much progress has been made toward equality, but not without its challenges, some of which still exist to this day. As we reflect on how far we've come this Black History Month, we must recognize the resilience and determination that have fueled these advancements. But reflection can only take us so far; we need to take further action to dismantle any discriminatory barriers that prevent everyone from living in a just society – and we can look to the past to help us get there.

How to Prevent & Treat Colds & Flu

By Huberman Lab

In this episode, Dr. Andrew Huberman explains the biology of the common cold and flu (influenza) and how the immune system combats these infections.

This video discusses the prevention and treatment of colds and flu, covering topics such as the immune system, behavioral tools, and compounds that can enhance immune function. It also dispels common myths about cold treatments. The video emphasizes the importance of rest, nutrition, exercise, and deliberate heat exposure, while cautioning against high doses of certain supplements.

This section introduces the topic of colds and flu and promises to discuss their impact on the body, how to prevent them, and how to recover from them.

- The discussion will include an explanation of the immune system and how it works.
- Behavioral tools for boosting the immune system will be mentioned.
- The section mentions that there are science-supported protocols and compounds for preventing and treating colds and flu.

If you still have cold symptoms like sneezing and coughing, you are still contagious.

- Continuing to experience symptoms like sneezing, coughing, and watery eyes means you are still contagious.
- People who claim they are no longer contagious after a few days of having a cold are mistaken.
- It is important to stay home and avoid contact with others if you are still exhibiting cold symptoms.

The immune system consists of the physical barrier, innate immune system, and adaptive immune system.

- The innate immune system is a generalized response system that deploys a basic set of neurochemicals to combat viruses.
- The adaptive immune system recognizes the infection and produces specific antibodies to combat the virus.
- The immune system also has a physical barrier component, which includes the skin and other features.

The innate immune system uses effector cells to physically barrier and neutralize viruses, while the complement system marks infected cells for destruction.

- Effector cells act as an ambulance system, going to infected sites and trying to physically barrier and kill viruses.
- The complement system in the plasma marks infected cells with a chemical signal that attracts natural killer cells to destroy them.
- The immune system releases cytokines like interleukin 1 and tumor necrosis factor Alpha to assist in removing the infection and repairing infected cells.

Short bouts of stress can enhance the function of the immune system, but excessive cortisol levels can be detrimental to our health and immune system functioning.

- Elevated cortisol levels early in the day are beneficial, while high levels in the evening are not.
- Cortisol plays a role in activating natural killer cells and deploying interleukins, which are important for the immune system.
- Inflammation and cortisol are necessary components of the innate immune system to combat infections, but excessive levels can disrupt sleep and gut microbiome.



When feeling rundown or experiencing whole body malaise, it is best to rest and get extra sleep to support the immune system.

- Taking a hot shower or bath before bed can help promote restful sleep.
- Activation of the innate immune system during sickness affects the brain, leading to increased fatigue.
- Changes in serotonin levels and sleep patterns contribute to the feeling of needing more sleep but not feeling fully rested.

Deliberate heat exposure, particularly in a sauna, can improve the function of the innate immune system and help combat colds and flu.

- A study compared athletically trained and non-athletic trained men and found that heat exposure in a sauna increased heart rate, vasodilation, and the release of heat shock proteins.
- Deliberate heat exposure in a sauna should involve high temperatures, around 180-210 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

The increase in heat shock proteins and other factors like endorphins can help boost the immune system and prevent or alleviate cold and flu symptoms. Vitamin D is unlikely to be the sole protectant against colds and flu, but it is still recommended to include it in your nutrition and supplementation routine.

- Low sugar fermented foods and probiotic supplements can support the gut microbiome and the innate immune system.
- Echinacea, although not dangerous, has not been shown to have significant effects on preventing colds and flu.
- If you choose to take echinacea, it is best to reserve it for when you feel rundown or during the winter months, and not take it continuously or for more than four weeks at a time.

You can watch the complete video on Dr. Huberman's YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtChcxeaukQ&ab_channel=AndrewHuberman



WHCMC BLACK HISTORY EVENT

Date & Time: February 20, 2024, 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Location: Casa Dante Lodge 19, 34 Lincoln Street, Welland ON L3C 5J1

A FUTURE TO BUILD, THROUGH DIVERSITY INCLUSION

Date & Time: February 23, 2024, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location: St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre, Welland Canals Parkway, St. Catharines, ON

STATE OF THE CITY ST. CATHARINES 2024

Date: February 27, 2024

Location: Club Roma ,125 Vansickle Road ,St. Catharines, ON L2S 3W4

WINSPIRATIONAL WOMEN: A CONVERSATION WITH VALERIE PRINGLE

Date & Time: February 29, 2024, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Location: St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre, Welland Canals Parkway, St. Catharines, ON

WHY DEI MATTERS? DEI WORKSHOP BY DEI COMMITTEE OF CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS

Date & Time: March 4, 2024, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location: The Exchange - Cultural Hub & Market
5943 Sylvia Pl, Niagara Falls, ON L2G 1S9

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BY GNCC WIN

Date & Time: Mar 8, 2024, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: Sheraton Falls view Hotel, 5875 Falls Ave Niagara Falls, ON L2G 3K7 Canada

STC NE E EVENTS



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