rabble rouser to watch

SARAH JAMA
HAMILTON, ONTARIO

rabble rouser to watch

ALYSSA WRIGHT
BARRIE, ON

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ROBIN BROWNE
OTTAWA-GATINEAU

rabble.ca
NEWS FOR THE REST OF US

Annual Report 2020
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News for the rest of us

- Progressive news features and analysis — focused on politics, labour and social movement stories not covered anywhere else
- Diverse and exclusive opinions and blogs
- In-depth series on critical issues facing people all over Canada
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- Sixteen years (yes 16!) of Canada’s best in progressive podcasts (plus our in-house podcasts: rabble radio and needs no introduction)
- Streaming videos of live lectures and events, and our own in-house webinars
- The Lynn Williams Activist Toolkit — featuring original backgrounders and actions on the pressing issues of our time
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- The Book Lounge: featuring original reviews, interviews and more
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- Daily and weekly e-newsletters
- babble, our moderated online discussion forum

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If your organization would like more information about becoming a Sustaining Partner, please contact:

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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

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“Consider this book a thorn in the side of complacency.”

WAYNE MACPHAIL, former director of Southam InfoLab and founder of the rabble.ca podcast network

“This collection is both a history of recent social movements in Canada and the story of how rabble.ca, one of the country’s earliest online media startups, navigated life on the internet through twenty years of tumultuous change.”

APRIL LINDGREN, Professor and Velma Rogers Research Chair, Ryerson School of Journalism

“Everything on (the) Line
20 years of social movement stories from rabble.ca edited by Sophia Reus and Christine Turner

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“You may get large amounts of funding here and there, but in the end, capital will never work to undermine capital. So, the way to fund a strong, independent, progressive media is through the grassroots, one person, one member at a time.” - Noam Chomsky
Dear readers,

Those of us who work in independent media dedicate our careers to this vocation because we know whole sectors of Canadian life are suppressed, ignored or neglected by the mainstream media. Rarely is there unbiased reporting on labour and social issues. rabble.ca's non-profit journalism has proudly maintained a focus on labour and worker rights, grassroots activism, and a progressive analysis of national politics, for two decades. Launched April 18, 2001, on the eve of the Summit of the Americas, we've been at the forefront of grassroots journalism since that time. At 20, we look back at being at the forefront of an extraordinary history of the evolution of Canadian online journalism. Always doing so without a paywall.

The last year has been one like no other. Over the past months, rabble has focused on sharing critical information and analysis about the pandemic, while telling stories about the spectrum of essential workers through Chelsea Nash's labour journalism. We've amplified the work of grassroots activists across the country through our "rabble rousers to watch" series, curated by our Activist Toolkit editor, Maya Bhullar. Jack Layton Journalism for Change writer Lidia Abraha last summer dug into the role of policing in Black communities. Award-winning federal politics reporter Karl Nerenberg shared incisive analysis of the happenings on Parliament Hill. We've kept our focus on the future of the planet, with our series Climate Hope in the Time of Pandemic, and in our upcoming Courage My Friends podcast series coordinated by Victoria Fenner with the Tommy Douglas Institute. And of course, babble's have been busy dissecting the news on babble, rabble's discussion board, moderated by Meg Borthwick.

As we look ahead, Canada's pandemic recovery must be inclusive, forward-looking, and transformative. It's one thing to "build back better," as many levels of government say they will do. But for whom are they building? How transformative are they really willing to be? "Building back" onto systems that are not working is simply building on failure. We need to pivot. That's why at rabble.ca, we're focused on what it means to build forward — not back. You'll find this analysis in our journalism, among our roster of Canada's best opinion writers, and in our live "Off the Hill" current politics panels, hosted by Libby Davies and Robin Browne, with regular panelists including Winnipeg Centre MP Leah Gazan, Paul Taylor — and special guests such as Pam Palmater, J Jim Stanford, and David MacDonald.

We are focused on holding governments accountable for the systems that have failed us, and featuring the stories of activists and changemakers who are fighting for that accountability, whether they speak to a feminist analysis of economic recovery; to genuine reconciliation with Indigenous peoples that is centered in Land Back; and to why the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for defunding the police are a central component of dismantling systemic racism, anti-Black racism, and patriarchy.

The challenge to transform organizations into anti-racist ones — not simply "not racist" — was raised to all sectors of society, including to the media. 2020 launched a time of stock-taking that includes community and independent media. As an organization that incorporates both a traditional, editor-directed journalism project, together with a community journalism model that creates space for volunteer bloggers and podcasters, we've looked inward at how our editors spend our journalism resources, and how we create and manage community spaces on the site. Last june, we responded to the call to action by the Canadian Association of Black J journalists and the Canadian J journalists of...
Colour to address the systemic racism that is pervasive — part of the fabric of capitalism and Canadian society. This vital work has been taken on by many community and media grassroots organizations, and for rabble has included taking on regular equity audits of our content, beginning in spring 2020, to better understand not just who is producing content and what issues are covered, but where specifically our editors are investing resources.

We’ve been reviewing our internal systems, including our website architecture and promotion strategies.

This is what media democracy is made of. This is why we need rabble.ca’s independent media.

rabble.ca’s exceptional writers and multimedia contributors bring powerful and innovative voices to the site. rabble.ca exists because of people — writers, video and podcast contributors, videographers, donors, readers and workers — who share a vision of what an independent media can and should be, and what the future is for media democracy in Canada. Our staff work daily to bring the best in progressive coverage to Canada.

Over the coming months you will see new faces at rabble, including new columnists like Evelyn Lazare and Chuka Ejeckam, while we continue to share some of the most powerful voices you need to hear in Canada — from Monia Mazigh, to Duncan Cameron, to Pam Palmater, to David Climenhaga, and so many more. We have big plans in the works to bring and share coverage with you in vital and creative ways.

rabble.ca continues to grow and push the boundaries of online media. As we move further into our 20th year, we have extraordinary memories and successes to look back on, as well as exciting times and challenges ahead. In a time of transition, we are grateful and honoured to have you, all of our readers and fI nancial supporters. You prove time and time again, with your support, that independent and reader-funded media is a sustainable model.

In solidarity,

Kim Elliott

—

NEWS, FEATURES & COLUMNS

2020! What a year. Like all independent media outlets, we had our work cut out for us in keeping up with the critical moments of everyday life, on a shoe-string budget. But we think we fared well: rabble’s team works collaboratively, and pulled together to support some of the best coverage of workers’ stories, of grassroots activism, and of federal politics — as you will see in the coming pages. We even introduced two new columnists: Chuku Ejeckham and Evelyn Lazare. Welcome to our team of insightful thinkers that include Monia Mazigh, Duncan Cameron, Matthew Behrens, Lois Ross, J une Chua and the multi-author, award-winning, Pro Bono column by the team at Iler Campbell LLP!

2020 news coverage began with all eyes on Wet’suwet’en, as RCMP offI cers launched a raid against Indigenous land defenders in Wet’suwet’en territory. Solidarity movements came out in droves all over the country to show their support for the land defenders. And they haven’t stopped.

Just a few weeks later, by the time the WHO determined COVID-19 to be the cause of a worldwide pandemic on March 11, everything changed for every single one of us. We pivoted our plans for the year to ensure we had up-to-date COVID-19 commentary and coverage; the kind of analysis no one was getting from mainstream media. Our coverage contained bI ng takes on cuts for a public medical lab that could have helped to fight the pandemic in Canada; the expressions of solidarity and mutual aid that emerged in the wake of the crisis; how Covid-19 transcends identity politics; social distancing exacerbating the digital divide; and Covid-19 reveals a divided country. In addition, our analysis looked at the emotional fallout, and how Covid-19 should be an opportunity to ensure that the new normal in future years includes housing for all.

Our major series plan for 2020 was to focus on climate hope and climate grief — to address the generational anxiety caused by the urgency of the climate crisis, and our governments’ slow response. When the pandemic was announced we adapted our series to become Climate Hope in the Time of Pandemic. This series tackled tactics for activists struggling with the emotional fallout of climate grief and burn-out, and how we can plant hope for the future. Our series interwove with Earth Day, and our 2020 Vegan Challenge, which encouraged people to give up animal products for a week, considering the ethical and environmental impacts.

Over the year we published a climate series of over 20 pieces, including:

• Rejecting the death instinct in a pandemic age by Matthew Behrens, which covered issues of activism, mutual aid; gendered violence; arms trade, and Wet’suwet’en.
• Could the shocks from COVID-19 lead to a new food system? by Lois Ross.
• After this Earth Day, let’s never go back to normal by Joel Harden.
• COVID-19 an opportunity to build a low-emission economy by Monia Mazigh.
• Human interventions in the environment as art experience by J une Chua.
• It’s time to repurpose dying retail spaces for community housing by Duncan Cameron.
• Bailing out on the old normal by Penney Kome, a piece that addressed the economy, the Green New Deal and renewable energy.

• Will there be a silver lining to this pandemic? by Jim Harding looked at bio-diversity and greenhouse gases.

• Twenty-first century ‘eco-grief’ is nothing new for the world’s underprivileged by Khadijah Kanji.

• After the COVID-19 pandemic, older generations should reflect on the need for climate action by Bill Blaikie.

• Politics after the pandemic: can good follow bad? by Duncan Cameron.

And finally we were proud to carry one of the final pieces by legendary journalist and rabble contributor Ed Finn, who passed away at the age of 93 in December 2020: As pandemic restrictions ease, Canada should replace its capitalist system with a Scandinavian-style alternative.

Our focus throughout this pandemic has been on how we can build forward — not build back systems of inequality founded in colonialism, patriarchy and white supremacy — as Pam Palmer, summarized in coverage of the RCMP. Building forward means elevating the social supports and calls for mutual solidarity that emerged during the pandemic into real progressive labour and social policies.

After the unconscionable murder of George Floyd in the U.S by police officer Derek Chauvin (since convicted), global movements emerged declaring once and for all that #BlackLivesMatter and no one is backing down on this inalienable truth.

As calls to defund the police were finally given credence, we witnessed a spectacular movement, led by Black activists in the U.S and Canada, saying that is enough is enough when it comes to police violence, and the state of policing. Jack Layton Journalism for Change writer Lidia Abraha joined rabble.ca at the beginning of May with the intent to “focus on some of the issues most urgently affecting racialized and marginalized communities, notably racism in the criminal justice and policing system.” Her inaugural piece would be on how the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet mobilizes thousands in Toronto.

Social movements were the catalyst that willed rabble into being, and 20 years later, we continue to provide a space to speak truth to power and behave as a platform for struggles for social justice.

news contributors, bloggers, columnists

blogs

Brent Patterson
David Climenhaga
David J Climenhaga
David Suzuki
Dennis Gruending
Doreen Nicoll
Ed Finn
Ed Finn, Brian Arden
Emma Lui
Gordon Laxer
J ohn Gordon Miller
Judy Rebick
Karen Rodman
Kim Elliott
Lizanne Foster
Matthew Adams
Ole Hendrickson
Pam Palmer
Penney Kome
Phillip Dwight Morgan
Robert Hackett
Thomas Woodley
Trish Hennessy

columnists

Amy Goodman, Denis Moynihan
Bill Blaikie
Brian Iler, Pro Bono
Celia Chandler, Pro Bono
Claudia Pedrero, Pro Bono
Duncan Cameron
Edward M. Hyland, Pro Bono
Erlin Knight, Digital Freedom Update
J im Stanford
J oyce Arthur
J une Chua
Karly Wilson, Pro Bono
Linda McQuaig
Lois Ross
Matt Hatfield, Digital Freedom Update
Matthew Behrens
Michael Hackl, Pro Bono
Monia Mazigh
Pro Bono, Michael Hackl
Rick Salutin
Rodrigo Samayoa, Digital Freedom Update
Safa a Lakhani, Pro Bono
Victoria Henry, Digital Freedom Update

news

Maya Bhullar
Tania Ehret
Alexandra Valahu
Anika Nyanjen
Anna Bianca Roach
Baraka Arar
Chelsea Nash
Christina Turner
Evelyn L. Forget
J enny Ferguson
Jessica Rose
Karl Nerenberg
Lauren Scott
Lidia Abraha
Marites N. Sison
Meg Borthwick
Nathanial G. Moore
Sarah Kurchak
Scott Costen
Silvia Argentina Arauz
Steven Heighton
Zaid Noorsumar
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED

Aaron Lakoff
Abdul Nakua
Adam R. Houston
Alfredo Barahona
Amanda Harvey-Sanchez
Amy Tan
Archanha Rampure
Beric German
Beth Lorimer
Bianca Mugyenyi
Bob Gallagher
Bonnie Gostola
Bruce Campbell
Canadian Foreign Policy Institute
Cathy Crowe
Chi Nguyen
Christopher J. Schneider
Chrysalis Désilets, Gabriela Jiménez, Beth Lorimer
Chuka Ejekam
Daphna Levit
Darussz Dolewanski
David Doorey
David Kattenburg
David McDonald
David Taub Bancroft
Emily Williams
Eric Stikwerda
Ernie Lightman
Farah Shroff
Fernando Arce
Larry Haiven
Lesley Wood
Liette Gilbert, Anna Zaalik
Lisa Lacoste
Lorenzo Vargas
Mark Hancock
Mark Nykanen, Howard Breem
Martha Friendly, Morna Ballantyne, Lynell Anderson
Matthew Hayes
Mazdak Gharibnavaz
Meenaskhi Mannoe, Viveca Ellis
Mehdi Rizvi
Melissa J ohston
Michelle Weirnroth
Naomi Lightman, Ted McCoy
Neela Hassan
Nicholas Erwin-Longstaff
Olivia De Brabandere
Paul Salvatori
Paul Taylor
Philip Lee
Pierrot Ross-Tremblay,
Nawel Hamidi, Colin Samson
Raluca Bejan
Rayne Fisher-Quann
Reakash Walters, Rachel Zellars
Reem Bahdi
Rick Arnold
Robert Sweeny
Robin Browne
Robin Tress
Sandeep Prasad, Alba Onofrio
Sara Speicher
Shama Naquishbandi
Shane Martinez
Shanese Steele
Sheryll Nestel
Sid Shnaiad
Stacey Hannem,
Christopher J. Schneider
Stacey Waken
Stefan Christoff
Stephan Wood
Sunera Thobani
Susan O’Donnell
Swend Robinson, Robert Hackett, Tom Sandborn
Tina S. Beier
Toby Sanger
Tracy Glynn
Toby Sanger
Tina S. Beier
Tracy Glynn
Neal smiles

JOURNALISM FOR CHANGE FELLOWSHIP

The Jack Layton Journalism for Change Fellowship was created in 2017 to honour the memory of the NDP leader. In 2011, Canada lost a great social justice champion. Layton inspired people by example, demonstrating that working together for social and economic justice is possible and achievable. The fellowship supports emerging writers and journalists who are passionate and engaged in developing unique voices in social change reporting. The fellowship is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for strengthening media democracy in Canada, while affording excellent mentorship and growth for new voices in our community.

rabble.ca has been fortuitous in its roster of fellows, beginning with Phillip Dwight Morgan, a Toronto-based journalist, poet and researcher. During his time at rabble Phillip was instrumental in getting to the heart of issues, in particular, systemic racial and economic inequality in Toronto. Olivia Robinson’s 2019’s fellowship recipient, curated a series on the importance of public libraries in furthering social justice. The series documented how libraries across Canada are re-imagining these public spaces and contributing in new and innovative ways to improve the social fabric of their communities.

Following this trend of exceptional young journalists, 2020’s Fellow was freelance Toronto community advocate Phillip Dwight Morgan. His contributions focused on some of the issues most urgently affecting racialized and marginalized communities, notably racism in the criminal justice and policing system, such as how black youth are disproportionately criminalized.

“This fellowship provides the unique opportunity for young journalists to take a critical lens on social justice issues. As a young woman of colour, I rarely find room for these stories in the mainstream media. Racism in the criminal justice system is a complex issue that deserves thorough research and reporting. As the 2020 fellow, I look forward to further exploring these issues, while shining a light on how Black Canadians in conflict with the law are treated in our criminal justice system,” says Abraha.

Read her series:

Death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet mobilizes thousands in Toronto
Toronto community advocates resist more police surveillance
Defunding the police is only the first step to abolition
Racial data gaps in the criminal justice system.
Where do we start?
Police violence is a public health crisis, so why aren’t there health-based solutions?
How do Black youth find their voice in the criminal justice system?

For more information about how to support the fellowship, please see: https://rabble.ca/about/journalismforchange
POLITICAL COVERAGE ON RABBLE IN 2020

Political coverage on rabble in 2020 was, like everything else in Canada, divided into two periods: pre-pandemic and after the pandemic began.

For rabble's parliamentary reporter, Karl Nerenberg, the year started with a story headlined “Do not reduce the lessons of Auschwitz to pious clichés”. It dealt with an Ottawa event commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the largest Nazi death camp, where 1.1 million people, most of them Jews, were murdered.

Next, rabble reported on a far-reaching report from the special federal advisory group on broadcasting and telecommunications. Key (and much contested) recommendations of that document aim to guarantee Canadian news and other content on the internet. 

This was followed by the Wet’suwet’en crisis in northern British Columbia. Indigenous peoples resisted a planned pipeline through their territory. The reverberations of that confrontation, which included solidarity actions in Ontario, consumed rabble's attention for several weeks.

By mid-March, COVID-19 loomed large. rabble's political reporter's first piece on the pandemic dealt with the need to protect the most vulnerable, especially First Nations.

From that point on, the politics of the pandemic became a constant preoccupation for rabble. There were many national political stories on COVID-19 which dealt with:

- pandemic-related income supports
- the vast contrast between U.S. and Canadian approaches to the pandemic
- guaranteed paid sick leave
- the impact on women
- the safety of schools

Pandemic coverage took a short break when the WE charity scandal hit in July. rabble's political reporter gave context to that complex mess. It started when the Trudeau Liberals awarded the politically connected WE organization a sole-source contract for hundreds of millions of dollars to manage a youth volunteer program.

rabble's political reporting and analysis over this period also examined the policy options for a post-pandemic world.

rabble provided accounts of the competing visions of free-market fundamentalists such as former prime minister Stephen Harper and progressives such as economist J. im Stanford. Among the major policy initiatives some proposed for Canada were a universal drug plan and a wealth tax. NDP's Peter Julian championed those and rabble gave them their full due.

Indigenous affairs took centre stage again in October, with a series of violent attacks on lobster fishers from the Mi’kmaq First Nation of Sipekne'katik in Nova Scotia. rabble's coverage gave historic context to readers' understanding of that crisis.

For the rest of the year, rabble continued to cover and analyze the political and policy responses to COVID-19, and also reported on the importance of the 2020 U.S. election for Canada.

The year ended on a lighter note when Karl gave tips on what to watch on internet streaming services. The list included lesser-known Canadian options, and mega-hits such as The Crown.

rabble set the record straight on The Crown's portrayal of the 1985 Commonwealth conference, which imposed sanctions on the Apartheid South Africa. The British series failed to mention Canada's central role in that decision, inaccurately giving all credit to Queen Elizabeth.

Throughout the year, Karl was part of rabble's national politics live video panel. Off The Hill — a thought-provoking panel discussion on current issues of national significance from a progressive and critically applied perspective not covered in the mainstream media.

Crown.

For the rest of the year, rabble continued to cover and analyze the political and policy responses to COVID-19, and also reported on the importance of the 2020 U.S. election for Canada.

This year the labour beat was all about how workers were navigating the pandemic. Even before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, our 2019-20 labour beat reporter, Zaid Noorsumar, carried on with his focus on the alarming concerns of workers who live in care facilities. Canada’s failure to protect those who live in care facilities would become one of the most revealing and disturbing stories to emerge in the pandemic.

From teachers, to food couriers, to migrant workers and grocery workers, here are some of the stories that contributed to the ongoing discussion about the many workers we call heroes. These are people governments and employers turned their backs on when they needed support most.

- In May, grocery stores across the country implemented a temporary $2/hour wage increase for workers. The measure was criticized for being revoked so soon, as workers continued to put their health and safety at risk by working on the pandemic’s front lines. 
  - The new policy was implemented to protect those who live in care facilities, increasingly vulnerable in this pandemic. Canada's failure to protect those who live in care facilities would become one of the most revealing and disturbing stories to emerge in the pandemic.
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• Over the summer, poor and abusive treatment of migrant agricultural workers by their employers during lockdown came to light, with Justicia for Migrant Workers organizer Jade Guthrie writing about a leaked video showing workers sleeping on pallets in a crowded warehouse. Labour reporter Chelsea Nash later interviewed Guthrie and Chris Ramsaroop of J4MW about the importance of migrant workers having access to permanent residency status to ensure their rights. Later, Nash also covered the food crisis that migrant agricultural workers were experiencing.

• In September, the focus of the labour beat turned to education workers who were agonizing about the reopening of public schools during an ongoing pandemic. Chelsea Nash’s story on the overworking and understaffing of school custodians was picked up by Global 640 radio. As well, she shone a light on the precarious situation facing Adult Day School teachers in Toronto, who didn’t know if they had a job to go back to until one business day before the semester was supposed to begin.

• 2020 was a big year for gig workers, as Foodora workers successfully organized and certified a union. Gig work was a focus of labour reporting at rabble.ca, particularly given the precarious conditions and low pay gig workers were expected to work under during the pandemic. Chelsea Nash covered the inside story of the Foodora union drive, the successful certification, and the $3.46M settlement that Foodora workers were awarded after Foodora pulled its operations out of the country after the Ontario Labour Board ruled in favour of the workers.

• One more ongoing conversation in the Canadian Labour movement this year was the role of police unions. Should they even be included in the Labour movement? Chelsea Nash wrote a historical breakdown of how police unions operate, their close ties to conservative politicians, and their shady tactics to protect their “workers” at all costs.

GRAB A CUP OF TEA AND RELAX IN OUR BOOK LOUNGE

Welcome to the Book Lounge, where the issues are hot but the takes are thoughtful!

Offerings in 2019 from rabble’s Book Lounge include a plethora of reviews, such as of Vivek Shraya’s delving into the subtweet and being vulnerable on the internet, a look at James Wilt and how big tech won’t save our transit woes, Between the Line’s organizing in a time of sickness, Billy Ray Belcourt’s insight into queer love in the praries, and so much more!

rabble’s book lounge is not limited to reviews! We also go further into the work of esteemed authors and invite writers for interviews. In the interview How to Tear Down The House, Julie S. Lalonde speaks powerfully about her newly released audio book, Resilience is Futile: The Life and Death and Life of Julie Lalonde, exclusively at rabble.

The Book Lounge is always taking pitches for reviews and essays on progressive books. To pitch a story, please email editor@rabble.ca
YOU WON’T BELIEVE
OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

On Facebook, we have a dedicated audience of 27,000 combined fans and group members who regularly engage with our content and help it go viral.

One such story was labour reporter Chelsea Nash’s October report that a long-term care home in Bowmanville, Ontario, was laying off 60 unionized workers only to rehire their positions with contract workers. That story garnered 1,064 reactions and reached nearly 10,500 people on Facebook.

On Twitter, rabble keeps up with major Canadian news competitors with nearly 43,000 followers. Not only are we part of the conversation, but we are driving it.

On February 10, freelance journalist Anna Bianca Roach was on scene when Crown-Indigenous Relations minister Carolyn Bennett’s office was occupied by 20 youth who organized a sit-in to support the Wet’suwet’en First Nation as it protested a pipeline being constructed through its traditional territory. A tweet detailing that sit-in was our most shared of 2020, being retweeted 178 times and receiving 30,000 impressions.

On Instagram, @rabbleca has grown more than ever this year into a hub for the rabble community. We share news, feature stories, and post our book reviews to our 1,600 (and growing!) followers.

Check out our Instagram page to see unique profiles of rabble rousers to watch, catch up on the latest leftist books, and stay up to date on rabble news, events, and more. Our most-liked post on Instagram this year was a critical analysis of the neo-liberalism in Bell’s corporatized “Let’s Talk” day for mental health.

In an increasingly crowded news market, real clout in the social media sphere is absolutely essential. We are fortunate to have the support of great community minds and influencers, artists, activists and commentators alike.

At rabble, we know there’s more than one way to read the news. Not only do we ensure our social media feeds are topped up with the very best in progressive journalism, we also deliver general daily and weekly newsletters syndicating pressing stories and commentary directly from our site to your inbox.

JOURNALISM
IN THE COMMUNITY

2020 led us to move our events indoors and virtual this year. With 20 years of experience in online media, we had a couple tricks up our sleeves.

Since its very inception in 2001 in Quebec City, rabble has been putting its money where its mouth is. We pay special attention to grassroots protest and social movements in our journalism — often because we’re already there.

Our outreach team is an indispensable component of our work, as we seek to organize critical workshops and panels, and ensure that Canada’s best radical artists and storytellers find audiences for their work. We continue to emphasize the importance of solidarity among social movement organizations through partnerships, including as media sponsors of Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion’s on-going anti-racism conference which ran through 2020.

In lieu of an in-person conference they held virtual anti-racism seminars throughout the year, with speakers such as Desmond Cole and Lynn Ly. We supported our new friends at the Canadian Foreign Policy Institute with their event on Canada’s silence on India’s colonization of Kashmir.

We were delighted to work directly with the Canadian Foreign Policy Institute on the Green Party of Canada Leadership debate. This event drew over 500 people and was hosted by rabble founder, Judy Rebick, on Sept 10, 2020.

To get readers engaged as we all stayed home, we brought back our #Veganchallenge, a feature where staff, volunteers, readers, and viewers go vegan to raise awareness of climate justice and animal rights for one week to coincide with Earth Day. In 2020, we partnered with the Health Save Movement in Toronto. Readers were happy to use their time at home trying out new recipes and exchanging their experiences online!

While staying inside, we’ve been able to focus on our (literally) in-house webinar, Off the Hill. Off the Hill is a thought-provoking panel interaction on current issues of national significance, from a progressive and critically applied perspective.

This monthly production features interesting and topical issues from a left perspective not covered in the mainstream media. Discussions are centred on impacts on people, mobilization, and bringing about progressive change. To view the full roster of episodes please visit: https://rabble.ca/rabbletv
Despite the difficulties of 2020, it was a year of activism. Toronto pioneered what became a global caremongering movement, when activists across Canada demanded better economic and social supports during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a year when the pan-national devastation felt following George Floyd’s murder in the US led to the call to defund police becoming mainstream in Canada.

The Lynn Williams Activist Toolkit, launched in 2013 and coordinated by Maya Bhullar since 2015, amplifies what organizers are doing. Our goal is to help activists share, discuss and create tools for organizing from the ground up. Lynn Williams was a labour organizer, activist and the first Canadian to become international president of the United Steelworkers Union. The toolkit reflects Williams’ dedicated work as a lifelong activist, providing organizers and communities with access to success stories, guides, workshop outlines, petitions, open source software, copy-left images, activist histories and more.

As conversations about police violence grew around the country, the Activist Toolkit took on the role of researcher. The Toolkit put together a province by province review of police oversight mechanisms, raised an alarm about white supremacists and their relationship with police forces, and grappled with the role of labour and progressives in managing the influence of police unions.

At the end of 2020, we launched rabble rousers to watch, asking the rabble.ca community to nominate local and community activists who are building change on the grassroots. This project brought together our social media promotions editor who published Instagram profiles of rabblerousers, our podcaster, and the Activist Toolkit. Together we have interviewed activists from nearly every province. Stay tuned for more about this wonderful project because this is what rabble was built for, to support activism and build.

A lot has changed in the world of podcasting since rabble first started podcasting in 2005. We were one of the first places in Canada where people could post their podcasts. That’s why we started the rabble podcast network — distribution was cumbersome and difficult. rabble created an online interface to make it easy to get podcasts from a person’s computer to the internet, and server space to store the podcasts. It was an important contribution to the development of the podcast space online in those early days.

Today, there are lots of ways for podcasters to get their shows to their listeners easily. So we’re changing the concept of “network”. We are happy to have fostered the growth of dozens of podcast series in our 16 years of podcasting. We said goodbye this past year to Talking Radical Radio, The Hum and Face2Face, our remaining network podcasts. They’ve got their own RSS feeds, their own distribution and they just don’t need us anymore. We bid a fond farewell to them and are happy that we were able to help them launch.

RadioLabour has an exclusive version of Labour News specifically for Canada hosted on rabble.ca. Some of the highlights from the podcasts including:

- Saving Alberta’s advanced education from privatization
- Ontario won’t fund the fight to save kids from COVID-19
- Make Air Canada the people’s airline again
- How a little newspaper started labour journalism in Canada
- 21,000 health-care workers infected with COVID-19

In late 2020 the focus of rabble radio shifted to special time-limited podcast series. In December we hosted a special series called My Art Wears a Mask, consisting of interviews with young artists as they talk about how the pandemic has affected their art, their livelihoods and their spirits.

In spring 2021, rabble is partnering with the Tommy Douglas Institute on a six-part series in lieu of their annual May conference, which can’t happen because of the pandemic. It is shaping up to be a great series called Courage My Friends.
2020 was the year that a much-needed regime change in Washington became a reality welcomed by many, and a call to sedition for others. George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, captured on the phone of Darnella Frazier, which then went viral around the globe. Here are some threads that highlight what it was like to be a progressive in lockdown:

Started in January of 2020 the thread Coronavirus: what Canadians need to know had progressives discussing and disseminating evolving information about COVID-19. It would be months before the full extent and impact of the pandemic would be widely understood. This thread has consistently been on the Active Topics front page for well over a year.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by police in Minneapolis. It was recorded by 17-year-old Darnella Frazier on her phone, with the young Black woman facing threats from police as she recorded. She later received many death threats and racist abuse from white supremacists on social media. The slow, agonizing death of Floyd went viral, resulting in a resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, a broad-based Defund Police movement, and community pressure that resulted in Derek Chauvin being charged with murder. He was recently convicted on three counts. The issue of police reform in the wake of Floyd’s murder surfaces in this babble thread.

And Joe Biden became president-elect in November 2020, narrowly beating out Donald Trump’s bid for re-election. In The Biden administration babblers discussed the election, the Capitol riot and, most importantly, the opening policy volleys of Biden’s early days.

2021 is shaping up to be another important year as we grapple with vaccinations, poor government pandemic response, and how the conviction of Derek Chauvin can be translated into ongoing action on brutal systemic racism in policing and the inherent racism in society that has allowed it to continue for so long.
20 YEARS OF RABBLE!

As we prepare this report, rabble has turned 20 years old! As our founders can likely attest, keeping this grassroots media project afloat for two decades and counting is a victory they couldn’t have predicted on April 18, 2001.

Although we cannot celebrate this momentous occasion together in person, you know that there will be many more events when we do meet again.

So what is to come in 2021? Our book!

Everything on (the) line: 20 years of Social Movement Stories from rabble.ca was released in April 2021. This long-anticipated book, published by Between the Lines Publishing, outlines 20 years of activist struggles and reporting. It guides readers deftly through rabble's archives, combining critical analysis with new essays from celebrated activists and writers.

Also keep your eyes peeled for our new website coming this Fall! Thanks to the support of the Canada Heritage Grant, we finally have the funding to update our website, with the opportunity to meet industry standards, delivering our news to you with a more accessible navigation system and an easier-to-use platform. We are switching to a WordPress model and couldn’t be more excited!

rabble will also finally have the opportunity to effectively archive 20 years of content. That's a large online library that covers the history and breadth of two decades of progressive activism!

Thank you for being with us on this journey!

FINANCIAL REFLECTIONS:
COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED MEDIA

Like community radio and TV, community online news sites depend on members to help them meet their budget.
rabble.ca is a registered non-profit organization, and we rely on the generous donations from our supporting donors — with both one-time donations and the all-important monthly memberships. We hold annual monthly donor drives to recruit members.

In 2020, with donations averaging $5/month, a total of $140,000 was raised from individual donors — over $92,500 of which came from our regular monthly donors.

Monthly supporters get a variety of perks, ranging from thank-you gifts upon sign up, — in 2020 that included Robyn Maynard’s Policing Black Lives and Seth Klein’s A Good War — Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency — to special event invitations and an exclusive newsletter for monthly supporters. Don’t miss out — sign up now: rabble.ca/donations.

The total operating budget for rabble.ca in 2020 was $376,786, with revenues of $408,480. Thank you to our donors! We couldn’t do it without you! Of course this is a fraction of what it costs to do journalism, and we thank all the volunteers whose time and effort make independent media like rabble.ca possible. 2020 was an extraordinary year and we thank Heritage Canada, Canadian Periodical Fund, for their special pandemic support, and for their grant that allowed us to move to a new Customer Relationship Management software.
rabble has a solid reputation for being an efficient and lean operation that punches far above its weight in terms of reach and in original content. In 2020, rabble again proved itself a sustainable organization, and saw the year end with a surplus, with plans for taking the organization in new directions, having undertaken a thorough organizational review in 2020, and with plans for a new website in 2021.
We had over 1.1 million users/unique visitors coming to the site in 2020, reading almost 2.6 million pages.

Nearly half of those coming to the rabble site do so by means of a Google search. Of the remaining half, links from social media surpassed direct links, referrals, as well as our weekly and daily newsletter as the primary means of reaching the site.

A total of 73% of our readers in 2020 came from Canada, and 15% from the United States. rabble also maintains a presence on Flipboard and Google News.

In 2020, 13% of our users were aged 18-24, and our largest audience according to Google Analytics — 25% our readers — were aged 25-34.

Through our Amplify! services, community members, groups and local businesses can invite our media-savvy crew of journalists and professional multimedia storytellers to record and amplify the messages of their events and conferences — and support media democracy and independent media at the same time.

As a non-profit organization, all revenues from rabble services are invested back into rabble.ca’s mission to bring progressive, grassroots voices to the forefront. Our fully equipped team of videographers, podcasters, photographers, bloggers, writers and social media professionals can help you to promote your goals. We offer fee-for-services, including live- and near-time video recording, podcasting, live-blogging, street-videos and social media storytelling, now available at competitive rates.

See more at rabble.ca/amplify, and see our amplify menu of services here. Allow us to help you tell your story, while you help non-profit independent media! Email amplify@rabble.ca for more information or to obtain a quote.

By advertising at rabble.ca you can invest your marketing and promotion dollars into not-for-profit, independent journalism. Consider promoting your campaign, petition or business on rabble.ca, and reach our dynamic, engaged and giving audience. rabble sells advertising packages for ad buys on our site, as well as on our social media and e-newsletter. We also carry editorial advertising opportunities for progressive research and advocacy organizations.

rabble.ca sprang to life in 2001 as an independent news source with strong roots in various movements working for social justice and equality. In 2020, rabble had 1.1 million readers. People come to rabble for news on social movements and for alternative takes on federal and provincial politics.

We have a strong presence on social media, with almost 43,000 followers on Twitter and 27,000 on Facebook and Instagram in total. 73% of our traffic in 2019 came from Canada.
Are you a civil society organization seeking new ways to broadcast your news? Look no further than In Cahoots. In Cahoots is rabble’s portal to the research and news releases of Canada’s vibrant civil society and labour organizations. In Cahoots was conceived as an opportunity to amplify the messages of the community of organizations who share rabble.ca’s progressive ideals, and work to realize this progressive vision. We have dedicated a part of our website’s homepage and social media infrastructure to share our partners’ words and press releases. People who click on links in In Cahoots posts will link directly to an URL of your choosing, allowing your communications team to maximize web traffic to your site.

Contact publisher@rabble.ca for information about advertising opportunities.

Join organizations other like-minded organizations such as:

- Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada
- Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
- Canadian Health Coalition
- Canadians for Tax Fairness
- Harrowsmith Magazine
- Inter Pares
- Mining Watch Canada
- Liisbeth Magazine
- The Starfish

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RESULTS FROM RABBLE’S 2020 READERS’ SURVEY

Results based on a voluntary survey of rabble.ca users conducted in Spring 2020, N = 904

- rabble readers are mostly between 25-64, from Ontario or BC, highly educated and with the majority earning between $20,000 to $70,000 per year.
- 49% of our readers identify as male, 47% identify as female, and 4% identify as Non-binary/Two-spirited/ or Genderqueer.
- 56% reported some form of employment, while 39% are retired.
- rabble readers care, with 89% donating to two or more community organizations every year. 46% donating to five or more.
- rabble readers are also highly involved in their communities, with 70% participating in volunteer work each week, 57% belonging to a political party, 42% belonging to a grassroots organization, 37% belonging to an NGO, 33% belonging to a professional association, 24% belonging to a trade union, 20% belonging to a co-operative, and 17% belonging to a religious organization.
- rabble readers are both loyal and committed to rabble’s various platforms, with 71% reading rabble on a desktop or laptop computer, and with 54% of these readers also accessing our news through daily or weekly email lists, as well as on our social media platforms.
rabble.ca operates with a dedicated crew of staff and volunteers. Our work is supported by interns, volunteers and a volunteer board of directors.

We are a virtual organization, with workers located around the country and, in 2020, around the world. We had regular staff across Canada — and even as far away as Abu Dhabi. We have columnists, bloggers, podcasters and videomakers from coast to coast.

rabble.ca is a proud member of the Centre for Social Innovation in Toronto, where we have access to work and meeting space, and can connect with other progressive organizations and businesses. In Vancouver, until May 2020, we rented space with our friends in Vancouver’s historic Dominion Building.

Executive of rabble.ca Members’ Council (as of June 2020 AGM)

• Matthew Adams (President)
• Bob Gallagher, USW (Vice President)
• Robert Lamoureux, CUPE (Secretary)
• Nicole Johnson (Treasurer/Acting Publisher)
• Phillip Dwight Morgan

Members’ Council (as of December 2020 AGM)

• Domenic Bellissimo, OSSTF
• Federico Carvajal, ETFO
• Jim Stanford
• Kathleen Monk
• Linda Silas, CFNU
• Mike Old, HEU
• Natalie Clancy, UNIFOR
• Ravi Joshi, Council of Canadians
• Riccardo Filpione, PSAC
• Shannon Devine
• Sylvain Beaudry, CUPW
• Tania Ehret, rabble staff representative
• Trina Donaldson
• Trina James, CFS
• Trish Hennessy
• Wayne MacPhail

Regular Staff (as of December 2019)

• Baraa Arar - Summer Books Editor
• Kim Elliott, Publisher
• Matthew DiMera, Acting Editor-In-Chief
• Tania Ehret, Operations Coordinator
• Meg Borthwick, babble Moderator
• Alex Cosh, Opinions Editor
• Maya Bhullar, Activist Toolkit & In Cahoots Coordinator
• Christina Turner, Weekend Editor & Books Lounge Coordinator
• Sophia Reuss, Summer promotions editor
• Victoria Fenner, RPN Executive Producer
• Shirley Marquez, Administration and Membership Coordinator
• Star Company, Bookkeeping
• Karl Nerenberg, Parliamentary Reporter
• Lidia Abrah, J ack Layton Fellow
• Chelsea Nash, Labour Beat Reporter
• Marilena Ramos Capelo, Graphic Design
• Krishna Labiharie, Graphic Design
• Michael Enslie, Facebook Group
• Consensus, Tech support
• Jase Tanner, Amplify
• Frank Preyde (babble)

President Emeritus: Duncan Cameron
Founding Publisher: Judy Rebick
Legal: Iler Campbell LLP
Auditor: Numeris CPA
Insurance: Numeris CPA
PEOPLE TO THANK

OUR GRATITUDE:

KEEP RABBLE GROWING

How can you keep rabble.ca going and growing?

• Become an individual rabble member for $5/month by visiting [www.rabble.ca/donate](http://www.rabble.ca/donate). rabble depends on memberships to survive and thrive.
• Support with a special one-time donation. No amount is too little or too much. See [rabble.ca/donate](http://rabble.ca/donate).
• Sign up for our FREE news summary: [www.rabble.ca/alerts](http://www.rabble.ca/alerts).
• Have your organization join in cahoots -- our sponsored portal of news from civil society groups in Canada. See: [http://www.rabble.ca/incahoots](http://www.rabble.ca/incahoots). Contact [business@rabble.ca](mailto:business@rabble.ca).
• Have a conference or event you want to broadcast to the world? Book our event coverage services at [amplify@rabble.ca](mailto:amplify@rabble.ca).
• Have your organization become a Sustaining Partner. Sustaining Partners provide financial support to rabble and receive a fantastic advertising package and promotion from rabble. Contact [business@rabble.ca](mailto:business@rabble.ca)
• Advertise on rabble.ca. rabble is Canada’s largest independent online news site. Contact [advertise@rabble.ca](mailto:advertise@rabble.ca).
• Tell us your news! If you have a story to tell, let us know! Contact [editor@rabble.ca](mailto:editor@rabble.ca).
“It is no exaggeration to say that the hopes of a decent world rest substantially on the success of the kind of work that rabble.ca has been carrying out with such distinction.”

-- Noam Chomsky

“I rely on rabble.ca to bring me the real debates that are shaping our country.”

-- Naomi Klein

“rabble.ca is a crucial resource for achieving media democracy in Canada, in this era of increasing corporate media concentration.”

-- Maude Barlow

“The world needs to hear a lot less from the mainstream media and a lot more from rabble.ca”

-- Linda McQuaig

“Our cherished, venerable, fierce and principled source of truly independent media in Canada.”

-- Avi Lewis

“rabble is essential, as in this climate, independent media is needed more than ever to provide an alternative to the dominant narratives, and bring authentic conversations and perspective to communities across Canada.”

-- Kinnie Starr

“rabble continues to publish strong and independent online journalism. I’m happy to support them.”

-- Margaret Atwood