September 11 presenters:

Arpal Dosanjh

Public hearing presentation: Vancouver on June 12
Submission: not available

Arpal Dosanjh currently lives with his wife Kamal in Vancouver. He has studied at McMaster University in Hamilton, Simon Fraser University in Burnaby and the University of Victoria, obtaining degrees in physics and law. He is currently pursuing a career in the legal profession and will start articling with a Vancouver law firm in November.

Arpal has been interested in the political process since he was a child. His involvement in student government at university heightened this interest. His recent interest in electoral reform forms part of a broader concern respecting deficiencies in the democratic process of western societies.

Katherine Gordon

Public hearing presentation: Nanaimo on May 27
Submission: Gordon-0234

Katherine Gordon's interest in electoral reform in BC stems from two sources. The first is an intense interest in political systems that began with the first vote she ever cast at the age of 18. "Casting a vote," Gordon says, "is one of the most exciting and privileged moments a citizen living in a democracy can ever experience. But only if it actually contributes to truly representative government."

Hence Gordon's second source of interest: she has voted in eight NZ elections, the last three of which were under MMP after the electoral reform process of the early 1990s. The results of the change are clear to Gordon - instead of non-representative government, she believes, New Zealanders finally have a government they have actually asked for.

As a fairly new Canadian citizen and a resident of BC, Gordon would like to see the same change occur in this province.

Bruce Hallsor

Public Hearing presentation: Victoria on June 10
Submission: Hallsor-0223

Bruce Hallsor has been involved in electoral reform as a member of Fair Voting BC since 1997 and as counsel for the Electoral Change Coalition of BC (ECCOBC), a short-lived coalition of parties and interest groups that existed from 1996 to 1998.

Hallsor practices electoral law, and has been counsel to several candidates and four different political parties. In addition, he has been legal counsel to three recall proponents and a recall opponent.

Since 2000, Hallsor has been a founding member of Fair Vote Canada, a national organisation dedicated to promoting electoral reform. Hallsor has been on the executive of FVC since 2002, and was elected Vice President in 2003 and again in 2004.

Tom Hoenisch

Public hearing presentation: Penticton on June 23
Submission: not available

Tom Hoenisch is a 47-year-old bus driver. Hoenisch has been interested in politics since he was in grade 10 in Princess Margaret Junior Secondary School in Penticton and Mr. Huebert taught him about Canadian politics in Social Studies. Shortly after that, Hoenisch began to realize that the results of elections often didn't reflect the political wishes of the people that he knew.

Hoenisch also had trouble with the fact that political parties who often got far less than 50% of the vote could have absolute power if they had a majority of the seats. To him, "it was as if these parties had a dictatorship for 3 to 5 years!"

Later on, Hoenisch learned that there are other types of electoral systems (especially important additions for him were proportional representation systems and preferential ballot systems). The last two provincial elections confirmed Hoenisch's belief that our system is broken. In 1996, the Liberals got more votes than the NDP, but the NDP had a majority of seats and a 5-year "dictatorship". In 2001, the Liberals got 57% of the vote and 97% of the seats. Hoenisch asks, "where was the representation for the 43% of the people who didn't vote Liberal?"

Nick Loenen

Public hearing presentation: Richmond on May 4
Submission: Loenen-0035

Nick Loenen is a former Richmond City Councillor (1983-87), and former Member of the British Columbia Legislature (1986-91). In 1992 he enrolled in a Masters program at UBC for the express purpose of studying voting systems. He obtained his Masters Degree in political science from UBC in 1995. His book *Citizenship and Democracy, a case for proportional representation* was published by Dundurn Press, Toronto in 1997. In 1998, he founded Fair Voting BC a multi-partisan citizens group which since its inception lobbied for a referendum on voting system reform and helped shape the Citizens' Assembly process.

Nick Loenen has written extensively on the need to make the voting system more democratic and on what system is best for British Columbia given its geography and political culture. Nick chaired the Reform Party of Canada's Task Force on Electoral Reform in 1997. The recommendations of the Task Force were accepted in 1998 and shaped the policies for electoral reform of both the Reform Party of Canada and its successor, the Canadian Alliance.

More recently, Loenen chaired the Adhoc Committee on the Provincial Constitution which produced significant recommendations on making government more accountable. He is a member of the Canadian Study of Parliament Group, and travelled to Gabon, Africa as one of four Canadians to observe and monitor the elections there on December 6, 1998.

Ian McKinnon

Public Hearing presentation: Saltspring Island on June 19
Submission: McKinnon-1323

Ian McKinnon has academic training in political science: BA (UVic), MA, MPhil. (Yale). He has worked in central agencies of government (PCO under Liberals, PMO under PCs, ADM in Finance under Socreds, DM in Economic Development under NDP).

Through the '80s, McKinnon was Vice-President and then President of Decima Research. With Decima he conducted public opinion research for 16 national or provincial elections across Canada as well as for three elections in other countries.

Chris Morey
Public Hearing presentation: Fort Nelson on May 11
Submission: not available

Chris Morey is the Mayor of Fort Nelson and Chair for the Northern Rockies Regional District. She was first elected to office in 1999 as a Town Councillor. After fulfilling that term, Chris ran for the position of Mayor and Chair in the 2002 General Local Election and was successfully elected into her dual role.

As an elected official and community leader of the municipality and region, Mayor Morey is dedicated to visionary approaches for long-term community development and economic diversification. She has also been a long-time advocate of implementing single-tier government for the area, and aspires to a regional municipality structure for the region.

Mayor Chris Morey began her professional career in health care, where she worked as a registered nurse for 15 years. After her decision to switch careers, she became a Certified Economic Developer and was employed by the Northern Rockies Regional District as an Economic Development Officer for eight years, prior to starting her own consulting business.

A northerner strong and true, Mayor Morey sees Fort Nelson and the Northern Rockies as "a great place to live, work and raise a family. We have so many extraordinary people in our region who help shape our vibrant and progressive community, and their diverse interests and talents will secure our overall goal of greater regional prosperity." Mayor Morey knows the region's natural resource sectors (oil and gas, and forestry) play an integral role in the regional economy. Her goals include keeping these important sectors strengthened and viable, and encouraging the year-round growth and activity, to complement the current economic environment.

Jim Nielsen
Public Hearing presentation: Kelowna on June 24
Submission: not available

Jim Nielsen has been a student of the British Parliamentary System for many years. The history and evolution of Parliament is most interesting to Nielsen. He also thinks that the reforms achieved over the centuries and their impact on Western Democracies is quite remarkable.

"While not the oldest parliamentary system," says Nielsen, "the British model has served many countries well, including Canada and of course our province. Citizens of many nations have embraced this system of government and, unlike many other social institutions, have generally an understanding of the process."

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY
ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Neilsen has been involved with all aspects of the party system during his political days including one federal, three provincial and even one local campaign. He served 14 years in elected public office.

While serving as Deputy Government House Leader of the B.C. legislature, Nielsen employed his knowledge of B.C.'s parliamentary procedures and rules. Nielsen was a member of an all-party committee that revised the rules of the British Columbia legislature in order to ensure a more orderly manner of conducting business in the House.

Nielsen has known many members of the B.C. legislature over the years including seven Premiers and he says that, "while difference of political opinions is obvious, almost all members are very defensive and supportive of the system, free-for-alls included."

Julian West

Public Hearing presentation: New Westminster on May 6, Nanaimo on May 27 and
Duncan on June 8
Submission: West-0177 and West-0467

Julian West has been thinking and writing about electoral reform for the past eight years. With Troy Lanigan, he co-founded the Electoral Change Coalition of British Columbia in 1997; this later merged into Fair Voting B.C., at which point West became a director of that organization. West was once appointed (2001) and subsequently twice elected (2002, 2004) to serve on the governing council of Fair Vote Canada, and has been annually selected by that council to serve on its five-member executive.

"All of these organizations have been broadly cross-partisan," says West, "and have had as their central principle the idea that citizens should determine the voting system." The activities West has carried out for these organizations include attending conferences on voting reform; observing the Quebec Estates General on Electoral Reform in February, 2003; and attending the opening conference of the New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy in February, 2004.

West has also made numerous radio and television appearances, notably a CanadaNow cover story, Voice of B.C., B.C. Almanac, and several interviews with the French-language CBC. He has appeared twice before the House of Commons Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, discussing various aspects of electoral legislation.

Most of West's writing on electoral reform is available on www.julianwest.ca. This website includes a recent presentation to the Berger Commission in Vancouver, and two papers presented at the annual conferences of the B.C. Political Sciences Association: on a model voting system for Canada (2004) and recommending the use of STV in Vancouver and other B.C. municipalities (1999, joint with Paul Tennant of UBC).