

Our report to you.

*The Tyee's 2021  
Year in Review*

Numbers, growth, action, awards,  
finances and support for 2021

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**THE TYEE**

# The Tyee's 2021 *Year in Review*

If we had to sum up 2021, we'd offer this apocryphal curse:  
"May you live in interesting times."

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There was no shortage of interesting stories in B.C. last year with many garnering international attention. A record heat wave, devastating forest fires, followed just a few months later by an atmospheric river and massive flooding. A pandemic that just won't quit. There was a federal election, too, remember that? The number of new terms and challenges that we collectively were dealt over the year felt unrelenting.

Through it all, a bright spot was that The Tyee was able to step up to the challenge and be a gathering place for solid, factual reporting and lively discussion to work through these challenges. We expanded our team, tried out some new areas of reporting and made real impact. And these efforts were recognized by our peers as we brought home many journalism awards.

There was also a quiet but significant change that happened in the organizational structure of The Tyee: we officially became a non-profit

society. As of Jan. 1, 2022, The Tyee is operating as a non-profit with a new board of directors. This is part of a journey towards solidifying our sustainability and long-term home of independent journalism in B.C.

Here, in a nutshell, is how The Tyee works: we publish original, in-depth articles five days a week, covering stories that other media miss and showcasing voices you won't hear anywhere else. We pay everyone involved. We hope, therefore, that what we offer is valuable enough to readers that they'll chip in a bit of money each month so that we can keep doing it. Whatever money we receive, we invest all of it into making more impactful journalism. This support from a small percentage of our readers means we can pay our talented journalists to do their thing, and we can keep our articles free for everyone to read, without a paywall.

Here's what reader support enabled us to accomplish in 2021.



# The Tyee's 2021 – *by the numbers*

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1,419

STORIES PUBLISHED

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8

MILLION

SITE VISITORS

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7

AWARDS WON

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4

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

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10

EARLY-CAREER JOURNALISTS WHO RECEIVED  
TRAINING & MENTORSHIP IN OUR NEWSROOM

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54%

INCREASE IN REVENUE FROM  
THE TYEE BUILDER PROGRAM

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# Our team *grew*.

The Tyee welcomed four new people to our staff team and two new contributing reporters, as well as provided emerging journalists with a training ground to launch their careers.

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Journalist and author **andrea bennett** joined as a new senior editor to support our growing reporting team. Newsletter specialist **Jacob Boon** and audience development analyst **Shubhalaxmi Patil** rounded out our audience development team, and **Kimberly Sayson** helps keep the machine running behind the scenes as our office and systems co-ordinator.



andrea bennett



Jacob Boon



Shubhalaxmi Patil



Kimberly Sayson

We also added to our ranks two stellar journalists as regular contributors: **Michelle Gamage** and **Francesca Fionda**.

For the fifth year in a row, we partnered with Journalists for Human Rights to provide paid fellowships for two emerging Indigenous reporters: **Jenessa Joy Klukas** and **Valerie Ooshag**. This fellowship is made possible by funding provided by JHR and is matched through The Tyee by an anonymous donor from a first-generation Chinese-Canadian family in Vancouver who has been grateful to be living and working on unceded Coast Salish territory for the past five decades.

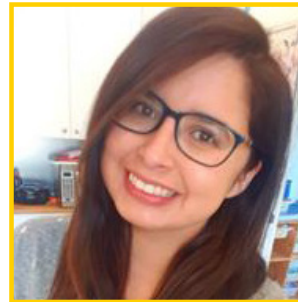
We participated, along with Hakai Magazine, in the first-ever Tula Immersive Journalism Fellowship which provided paid fellowships for two emerging journalists: **Zoë Yunker** and **Hiren Mansukhani**.



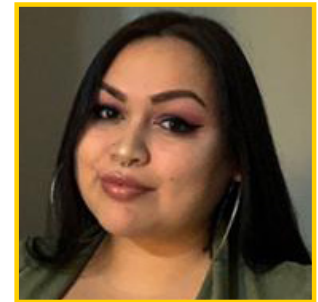
Michelle Gamage



Francesca Fionda



Jenessa Joy Klukas



Valerie Ooshag



Zoë Yunker



Hiren Mansukhani

# We got really into *email*.

We know, who needs more emails in their inbox?  
Hear us out.

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We truly believe that email newsletters are an excellent medium for special series and for opening up thoughtful dialogue with readers that can be much more meaningful than on other platforms. This year we experimented with two short-run email newsletters that our readers loved. Look out for more in future.

## THE RUN: SEASON TWO

When the federal election was called in the summer, we knew we had to revive our award-winning politics newsletter. Launched and edited by associate editor **Olamide Olaniyan**, *The Run: Season Two* featured **incisive essays** from writers you don't normally hear from in national politics media.

## UNDER THE WHITE GAZE

After years of covering cities and diaspora communities, reporter **Christopher Cheung** had something to get off his chest, and a topic to explore in a way that hadn't been done before. Why, he wondered, do non-white communities get covered so little, and so bizarrely in our media? This question sparked the idea for an essay called "Blind Spots", which won the 2021 Dalton Camp Award, which then prompted a limited-run newsletter called **Under the White Gaze**. Over 10 issues, Christopher guided readers to consider how media reports on and shapes perceptions of racialized people: separating good immigrants from bad ones, erasing racialized neighbourhoods that have been around for decades, and reductively using race to explain homophobia or poor health. The newsletter encouraged readers to write in responses, and hundreds of you did.



# Our journalism *made things happen.*

We know on an intuitive level that journalism makes an impact, and in the past few years we've been logging the instances we witness of a story in The Tyee leading to a change in the wider world.

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We take note when an article gets picked up and expanded on by other media, starts an important conversation, or apparently prompts someone in power to take action. Here are just some of the impacts we've tracked this year.

## **Environmental pollution was investigated.**

After northern B.C. reporter Amanda Follett Hosgood **wrote about** contamination from Coastal GasLink, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako arranged a meeting with Coastal GasLink to discuss and get more info about the contamination issues raised in the article.

**A student who experienced racism got (some) justice.** Following **in-depth reporting** from The Tyee's Katie Hyslop, a student at Lord Byng Secondary School who was the victim of racist bullying signed a Human Rights Tribunal settlement with the school district and the Vancouver Police Department.

## **A robust public discussion on COVID**

**mitigation attempts was sparked.** One of Andrew Nikiforuk's many **widely read pandemic pieces** led to various radio interviews and public debate about more aggressive health measures to protect public health.

## **Hospital porters got their vaccines sooner.**

Within 24 hours of health reporter Moira Wyton's **story** being published, supervisors notified all porters at Vancouver General Hospital that they would be eligible for the vaccine that week, whereas before their appointments were not prioritized at the same level as their nurse and doctor colleagues.

**Voting rights were debated in the legislature.** Sparked by Andrew MacLeod's coverage of B.C.'s intervention in the Toronto vs. Ontario voting rights case that's at the Supreme Court of Canada, elected representatives took the government to task for their role.

**More people got access to vaccine appointments.** After Tyee reporter Jen St. Denis published a story about seniors in Vancouver's Chinatown having trouble accessing vaccine clinics, the transit authority added a shuttle to assist in getting them there.

**People got access to needed financial help.** Readers wrote in to tell us they were made aware of and received the pandemic BC Recovery Benefit because of a story from Andrew MacLeod.

**Potentially dangerous oil tanker traffic was halted.** Following the publishing of a story about oil tankers in Active Pass by Michelle Gamage, the Pacific Pilotage Authority issued a Notice to Industry, a public document banning all tankers from taking Active Pass. This ban stands until the authority completes a safety assessment of the area.

**Plans for massive coal mining ground to a halt.** "Andrew Nikiforuk's sustained, detailed coverage of the politics of coal in Alberta was central to the birth and growth of an environmental opposition to a provincial government never seen before in Alberta," says University of Alberta political scientist and conservationist Ian Urquhart. Nikiforuk's many Tyee pieces exposing foreign miners' plans and impact "very likely forced the government" to hit pause and seek public input, says Urquhart.



# We focused on bringing *more diversity to our pages and improving inclusivity.*

One of our missions is to showcase voices you wouldn't hear elsewhere, and it's important to publish stories written by or featuring people that reflect the diversity of our communities.

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This includes people underrepresented in media including, but not limited to, women, Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour, people of various gender identities, LGBTQ2S+ people and people with disabilities.

This work is not done in a silo — all of our writers are encouraged by our diversity and inclusion committee to include such perspectives in their work.

We continue to add to our style guide, which focuses on decolonizing and inclusive language while avoiding essentialist descriptions. Reporter Christopher Cheung, author of *Under the White Gaze*, also won the first Jack Webster Award on Diversity and Inclusion for his pandemic reporting on the intersections of health and race.

While they learned from us, we also learned a lot from our Indigenous reporting fellows who joined us as part of the Journalists for Human Rights program. Many have remained in the industry and won awards. The Tyee also runs a summer internship program, with the majority



of interns this year being from underrepresented groups. Many have freelanced for us afterwards.

We've done a lot of important housekeeping this year. Our website now acknowledges the Indigenous territories where our respective staff are located. We've implemented new policies on supporting staff in the face of social media harassment.

In the spring, The Tyee participated in the Canadian Association of Journalists' survey on newsroom diversity. At the time, our staff were 74 per cent white, and 40 per cent of interns in the past year were white. Internally, we conducted a more detailed survey of our frequent contributors, which touches on everything from disability to education. One finding is that our contributors were three-quarters white. All respondents who shared comments expressed gratitude for our efforts.

To work towards a more inclusive newsroom in 2022, we identified three key areas based on recommendations from Canadian Journalists of Colour and the Canadian Association of Black Journalists: recruitment, career development and support, and editorial content. One project that will soon launch is our new "How to Pitch The Tyee" page, which seeks to demystify the editorial process and encourages writers from underrepresented groups to submit.

Again, goals of diversity and inclusion are a team effort. They don't mean that journalists who are white, male and/or heterosexual have no part to play, or that journalists from underrepresented groups do all the heavy lifting. We can all support one another to find and highlight voices missing from our journalism.



# We made some significant changes *behind the scenes.*

For our readers and most of the people working for The Tyee, the change to us operating as a non-profit is imperceptible — we're still the same team of people focusing on putting out articles every day.

Since its inception in 2003, The Tyee has been structured as a for-profit corporation with ongoing investment from shareholders. However, for all intents and purposes, The Tyee has operated like a non-profit organization all along — we've always used all revenue raised to go back into producing more journalism, not producing profits for shareholders. We think this is a good thing. With full support of The Tyee's core stewards, we assembled a founding board and officially registered The Tyee Independent Media Society last summer. On Jan. 1, 2022, the society officially took over operation of The Tyee.

What will this do? For one thing, it's just a more appropriate structure for how we operate. For another thing, it opens up the opportunity to seek **Registered Journalism Organization status**, which will allow us to issue tax receipts to the thousands of readers who support us with donations. It's all part of our plan to seek long-term growth and sustainability for the publication.



## Tyee Independent Media Society Board of Directors



### PETER KLEIN

Peter W. Klein is the founder of the Global Reporting Centre, a UBC-based non-profit focused on producing and innovating journalism on underreported issues around the world.

He is former director of the University of British Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, where he continues to serve as an associate professor, teaching investigative and global reporting, and leading research projects on global health and security. He was a long-time producer at CBS News *60 Minutes* and is a regular opinion contributor to the *Globe and Mail*. He is the recipient of numerous journalism awards, including several Emmy, Murrow and Sigma Delta Chi awards.



### MICHELLE HOAR

Michelle directs the **Hey Neighbour Collective** project at the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, a multi-stakeholder collaborative project aimed at building community, social connectedness and resilience in multi-unit housing.

Michelle co-founded The Tyee and Tyee Solutions Society and managed The Tyee's **Housing Fix** project, a solutions-journalism and civic engagement project focused on Canada's housing crises.

Michelle's completion of the SFU Certificate in Dialogue and Civic Engagement in 2017 and the IAP2 Foundations program in 2018 (International Association for Public Participation) cemented an interest in utilizing her emerging skills as an engagement facilitator in areas she's passionate about: affordable housing, social and environmental resilience, and urban planning.



### MELODY MA

Melody Ma 馬与雅 (Cantonese: ma5 wan4 nga5, Mandarin: mā yún yǎ) is a tech startup founder, civic advocate, and writer. She is the co-founder of Podyssey Podcasts, an online community of podcast lovers that's like the "Goodreads of podcasts."

Melody's writing and advocacy work has appeared in *The Tyee*, the *Star Vancouver*, *CBC*, *Maclean's*, the *Toronto Star*, the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Globe and Mail* and other local, national and international media outlets.

She currently serves on the board of Vancouver Public Library and has served in various governance capacities to Pi Theatre, Ballet BC, the Arts and Culture Advisory Council for the City of Vancouver, and artsScene of Business for the Arts. As a community advocate, she has led efforts to distribute free rapid COVID tests, preserve Vancouver's historic Chinatown and started youth computer coding initiatives in B.C. schools.



### DEBLEKHA GUIN

Deblekha Guin is the founding executive director of the Access to Media Education Society, a grassroots non-profit that supports marginalized youth in making and sharing story-based creative work that centres their unique perspectives, increases awareness about social and environmental justice issues, and illuminates the essential role of the arts in cultivating visions for change.

Raised in Six Nations territory in southern Ontario, Deblekha moved to the unsundered territory of the Penelakut and other Hul'quim'in'um-speaking Nations 28 years ago. After arriving on what is colonially known as "Galiano Island," Guin joined forces with a motley crew of creative misfits determined to start a film school in the woods. She launched AMES in 1996 after helping to start the Gulf Islands Film and Television School.

# Our work was *awarded recognition.*



## 2021 DIGITAL PUBLISHING AWARDS

Gold for Emerging Excellence  
– *Christopher Cheung*



Gold for Best Feature Article (Short)  
– *Andrew Nikiforuk*

## 2021 WEBSTER AWARDS



Bill Good Award for  
*'Significant Contribution to Journalism'*

Winner of Excellence in Technology Reporting  
– *Bryan Carney*

Winner of Excellence in Diversity and  
Inclusion Reporting  
– *Christopher Cheung*

Winner of Excellence in Business, Industry,  
Labour & Economics Reporting  
– *Andrew MacLeod*

## ALBERTA MAGAZINE AWARDS



Winner of B.C. Magazine of the Year

# Here are The Tyee's *financial facts.*

We truly could not have done all of the above without the support of thousands of readers who chip in to our reporting fund each month, or give occasional one-time contributions.

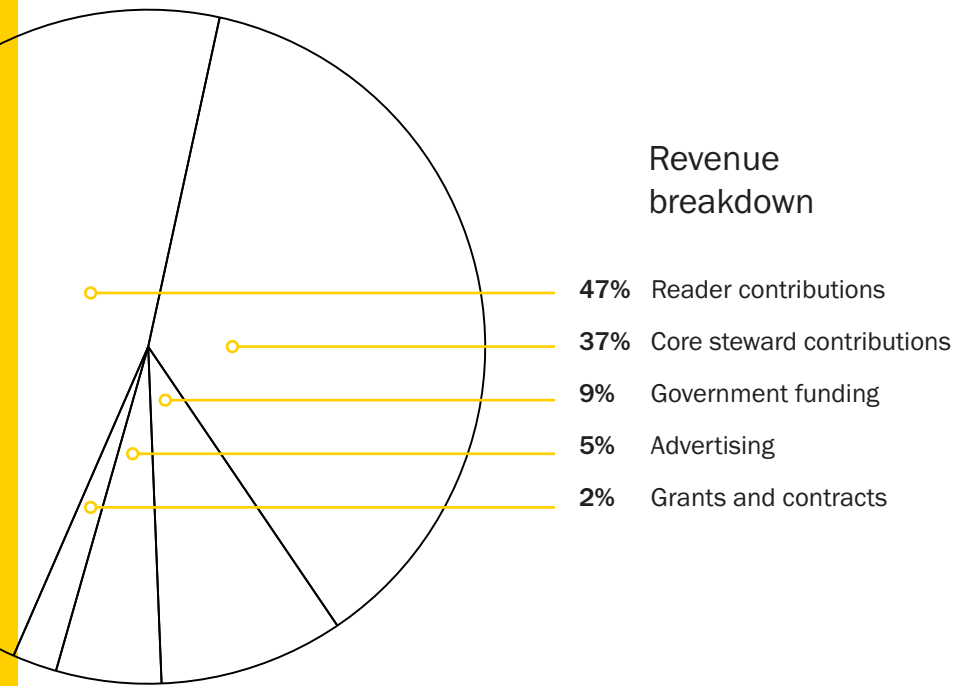
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Our model is super simple: We have a **core steward** who provides core funding to our operations. We bring in some money through advertising, government funding, and grants and contracts for journalism fellowships and projects. And the rest, around **47%** of our budget, comes from readers.

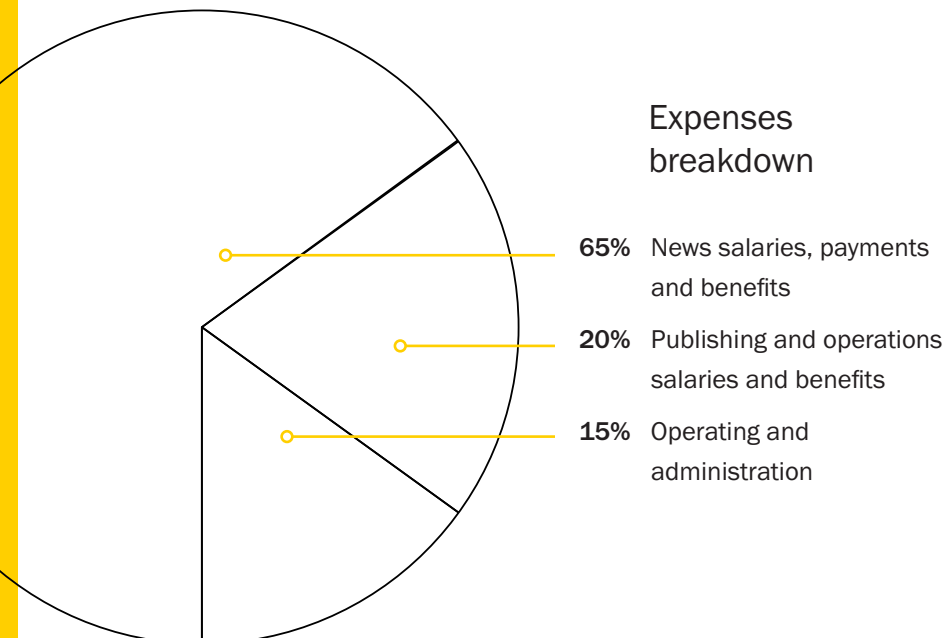
It's our vision to grow our readership support to make up more than half of our budget. This will set us on a sustainable path and ensure the long-term success of the publication. Each year, we're getting closer to that target.

In 2021, **9,434** people supported The Tyee, for a total of **\$850,800**. This represents a **54%** increase from the same period last year.





For the fifth year in a row (as mentioned above), we partnered with Journalists for Human Rights to provide paid fellowships for emerging Indigenous reporters. This work was supported by a contract with JHR and a matching donation from an anonymous donor. We also enrolled in the Facebook News Innovation Test this year wherein The Tyee is compensated for sending links and preview copy to Facebook via API.



The Tyee has received designation as a Qualified Canadian Journalism Organization from the Canada Revenue Agency, which means we have access to a refundable labour tax credit for part of our editorial salaries going forward. As we do not have Registered Journalism Organization status yet, contributions to The Tyee are not yet tax-deductible but we aim to achieve this status as soon as possible.

Thanks to all of our supporters, readers, reporters, and lovers of independent media.

The Tyee's health reporter is supported through the Local Journalism Initiative, a program funded by the Government of Canada.

**Canada**



# This team depends on *your support.*

## Thank you!

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**Francesca Fionda**  
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**THE TYEE**