

VANOC, the Party-Poopers

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Wednesday, February 10, 2010

<http://politicsrespun.org/2010/02/vanoc-once-tried-to-trademark-the-number-2010-remember-that/>

Once upon a time, VANOC's idiocy was relatively new to us. Five years ago, they tried to prevent others from using the number 2010. [You can read about its brush with the law here.](#)

VANOC is like the host of a party that you never meet. You have no say in how they plan the party. They answer to no one. They spend all your money, but they won't tell you how much you have to pay to get out of the party at the end. And once you're in the party, you have to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars to get into the rooms where "things" take place. Oh, and the party host drives an SUV: the jokes are going viral about how the Anti-Idling-By-Law-Ignoring VANOC SUVs are causing the elevated temperatures in Vancouver [sorry El Nino] that have melted all the snow on Cypress Mountain.

Why does any of this sound appetizing?

VANOC's sense of what it takes to build a celebratory community culture is simply deranged. And we have only to follow the Olympic spliff torch as the Governator carries it on Friday.

Over a few hours last night I read of [yet another American indie media member harassed at the border](#) trying to get into Canada, the second instance in 4 days and only weeks after [Amy Goodman was delayed on her way into Canada](#). Last night I also read and watched how VANOC security personnel tried to convince a reporter that [taking pictures outside a nebulous security perimeter is not allowed](#).

I know I am a free speech zone, but what about the vague area outside venues? And who's right? Me and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or VANOC, the IOC, an eager VANOC volunteer and a sanctioned or rogue member of VANOC's 15,000 member security force?

In contrast to the soft fascism of global corporate Olympic "celebrations" for the rich and famous, we have the [Decentralized Dance Party](#). These community enriching, mobile, public dances reflect what a healthy, vibrant social fabric looks like. [You can watch some very well edited compilations of their parties here](#). I particularly enjoyed the [Metrotown mall security](#) having a hard time comprehending the dancers who co-opted the private "common" mall space for a public event, before the party drifted onto the Skytrain and Seabus. Information on [their next dance this weekend is here](#).

There will also be a not-so-spontaneous "Dancing in the Streets" flash mob on Saturday to welcome the world. Despite it taking place in the context of the Olympics, it has the potential to actually be merely social and fully apolitical. I wish them well.

A party should not bankrupt, maim, impoverish or denigrate people or values--whether or not they can attend the party functions. Parties that do that are not for the good of society.

When we endure the Olympics and watch the corporate media and political boosterism of the whole

show, we must use this core criteria to determine value: do these activities build community or destroy it?

I have my bias, but I'll be looking for glimpses of anything positive. I can't say I'm optimistic, though.