

**Subject: [Fwd: Northlands Affair]**

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jan 2003 14:51:38 -0800

**From:** Brian Platts <brian\_platts@telus.net>

**To:** Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

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**Subject: Northlands Affair**

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jan 2003 11:07:43 -0800 (PST)

**From:** Laurie Johnston <lauriej\_v7g@yahoo.com>

**To:** newsroom@northshoreoutlook.com

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Editor,

I would like to express my appreciation, as have several readers in recent weeks, for your continued thorough and excellent reporting coverage and editorial comments on the Northlands embezzlement. I particularly agree with your criticism in the January 9 edition of the proposed out of court settlement.

In addition to the important questions regarding the apparent delayed reporting of the alleged fraud by the district staff to council (for which I am at a loss to understand why Coun. Ernie Crist's motion for further explanations from the district manager was defeated), a very significant issue that needs to be investigated and clarified by the newly appointed committee is the evident prolonged undetected misuse of the district credit card by the employee in question. This indicates serious weakness in the financial control procedures. Either no adequate system of supervision was in place, or if there was such a system it was not being complied with. A responsible district employee should have been reviewing the credit card transactions on a monthly basis to verify that the goods and services paid for had been certified as received and were legitimate expenditures of the golf course operation. According to the remarks of the purchasing manager and Mayor Bell as quoted in your article of December 19, a proper control system has been in place in other departments but had broken down in the Northlands operation. That this could have continued over a period of several years is incredible. Did the auditors never look into this? In any case, the employee or employees responsible for the breakdown should be subject to disciplinary action and a legal opinion obtained as to whether they should be liable for reimbursement to the district of the misappropriated funds. If the responsible employee turns out to be the general manager who will apparently be terminated, then I fully agree with the position of Coun. Crist that there should be no salary settlement until the question of the responsibility for the failure to review and detect the fraudulent payments is clarified.

I also understand that in late November the previous council passed a resolution calling for an independent external audit of the Northlands operation. I hope we will have news of related developments in the near future.

Keep up the good work.

Lawrence Johnston  
North Vancouver

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