

Liberal Times

The Official Newsletter of the Nepean-Carleton Federal Liberal Association

P.O. Box 11315, Station H, Nepean, Ontario K2H 7V1 <http://www.ncfla.org>

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear fellow Liberals,

With the advent of spring, there are new rumours filling the air on the potential for an election. It appears the Conservative Party and Prime Minister Harper are more concerned with governing by polls than governing on behalf of all Canadians.

While the riding association in Nepean-Carleton will be prepared for any election call, we aren't letting this distract us from other priorities. We are actively moving ahead with event planning and actions on the environment, policy and communications. I want to extend my thanks to the Board members and regular association members who have dedicated so much time to helping in these areas.

Your dedication and commitment makes for a stronger riding association and one that will continue to play an important role in helping stimulate debate and leverage the strong sense of civic duty that many residents share for our community and riding.

On a sad note, a fellow Liberal passed away in March. Anne MacGregor was a great supporter of local Liberal Party activities and, in particular, the provincial Liberal riding association. Her loss is shared by all of us in the Liberal family. On behalf of the Nepean-Carleton Federal Liberal Association, I'd like to extend our deepest condolences to her family.

*Gordon Shields
President, NCFLA*

NCFLA WEBSITE

A new and exciting part of the Nepean-Carleton Federal Liberal Association is our impressive website, located at www.ncfla.org. If you haven't yet visited, please do ASAP, as it's an extremely useful resource. From this site, you will be kept informed on recent Liberal Party news, as well as local news and information.

The website boasts an event listing, past newsletters and various documents, as well as a discussion forum to debate the major issues of the day. Register for an account on the website to full enjoy the Nepean-Carleton Liberal experience!

If you wish to donate to help take this riding back for the Liberals, and get rid of Pierre Poilievre's partisan non-representation, there is also an opportunity to do so, and this fully-featured website is also the place to sign up for the ChequeMate program.

Encourage your friends to visit the site, as there is also the opportunity to join the party online!

MEMBERSHIP Q & A

Q. How do I join the party?

A. If you're a Canadian resident 14 years of age and older, and do not belong to another federal political party, there are two options: You can join online using the "Join the Party" link on the www.liberal.ca website, or you may send a request to obtain a membership application form by mail from the NCFLA Membership Secretary, at kanwal@ksingh.ca.

Q. Why should I join?

A. The key benefits of membership include making a positive contribution to your community by joining the party, the opportunity to submit your valued opinions and suggestions to facilitate the party's strength and success in Nepean-Carleton, attending the local riding association's regular meetings and volunteering your talent and expanding your reach for the betterment of your riding.

Q. How do I get my friends to join?

A. There are several avenues to help convince others to join the Liberals in Nepean-Carleton:

- a) Enthusiastically describe the NCFLA, not just the party, to the prospective member
- b) Bring your acquaintances to our meetings to give a brief overview and show how others are using their free time to help Canada
- c) Provide information about key events held by the NCFLA in the last six months; events that have worked to make the riding association a stronger voice on behalf of residents
- d) Set up their e-mail account to receive the NCFLA newsletter, press releases and recently published letters
- e) Invite them to visit the excellent and useful NCFLA website to view ongoing discussions, find pertinent information and contribute to the forums, at www.ncfla.ca.

Q. What is ChequeMate?

A. Our prestigious ChequeMate club is a growing list of area Liberals

offering their support through small monthly donations and who at the same time enjoy a variety of social events with fellow Liberals, MPs and other special guests throughout the year. Donating to the Liberal cause helps make our riding association and the Liberal Party stronger and all donations are tax deductible! Further, as a ChequeMate member, you will never have to worry about renewing your membership; that's all taken care of for you. Join today!

Kanwaljit Singh Azad



Dion is applauded in Parliament

BE A VOLUNTEER!

Liberals in Nepean-Carleton are working hard to give our riding better representation in Parliament. Your help will make sure this happens.

The NCFLA is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to roll up their sleeves and help out in the riding. In this pre-election period there is much work to be done.

The volunteer work will be occasional and the time commitment will not be demanding. The work will be tailored to your personal schedule, availability and interests. Most important is building a team of committed Liberals who are reliable and dependable.

Please, join our team! There is no question that we can win the next election, and you are needed! Will you step forward to be a volunteer? If yes, please contact myself at nardin.ghadary@sympatico.ca.

Nardin Ghadary

EDITOR'S DESK

What an exciting Parliament we've seen lately. We have the NDP questioning its very existence, with Winnipeg MP Pat Martin suggesting that his party should disband and join the Liberals to "unite the left" against the Conservatives. The Bloc Québécois is reeling from the horrendous defeat of its provincial partner, as the PQ failed to earn official opposition status after the recent provincial election. Harper's Conservatives were dealt a blow, as their desperate attempt to prop up Jean Charest's government by sending tons of federal cash to Quebec was rejected by the voters, and they instead turned to the quasi-separatist ADQ.

Jim Flaherty's flop of a federal budget earned criticism across the political spectrum, and with its focus on vote-buying in Quebec and dividing Canadians with biased, partisan, targeted tax credits, residents of Nepean-Carleton were not impressed. The Conservatives continue to live with the despicable fact that they raised taxes on low-income Canadian families, taking money from those who struggle most to keep food on the table.

Residents in Nepean-Carleton are worried about the future. Petty vote-buying Conservative tactics do nothing to preserve our just society. The Tories had to be dragged kicking and screaming into action on the environment, and they now appear to dislike their own Clean Air Act. The House of Commons environment committee recently reviewed the legislation, offering major amendments, and the Harper government is already rejecting them, leading us to further delay on climate change and clean air.

A discredited childcare "plan," soft-on-crime attacks on the gun registry, uncertainty about our mission in Afghanistan...the list of failures on the part of this government goes on and on. Let's work to repaint this riding and this country Liberal Red!

Mark Johnson

PIERRE WATCH

As you've no doubt read in the newspaper, Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre has been hard at work embarrassing and misrepresenting the views of Nepean-Carleton. Here are just some of the antics of our immature and juvenile MP:

He recently was roundly castigated for alleging that the Liberals have **extremists** and **terrorist sympathizers** in our caucus, simply because we voted to uphold human rights and refused to sacrifice civil liberties for the sake of defending the coercive powers of the state. Canadians from coast-to-coast were aghast at Poilievre's drive-by smear; in taking this cheap shot at legitimately elected Members of Parliament, Pierre has not only attacked their reputation, but has also insulted the intelligence of Canadian citizens, who saw Liberal MPs as best to represent the interests of their riding.

Liberals will not apologize for defending the civil liberties of Canadians. The Conservatives, on the other hand, voted for police powers to arrest Canadians without charge or explanation. Canadians will remember this Tory assault on our most basic human rights.

Poilievre has defended **porkbarrelling** and **patronage politics**. According to the Pierre, the Conservatives have no plan to cleanse partisanship from government appointments and will use the promised Public Appointments Commission "**to ensure only their qualified friends get the jobs.**" We now know that when it comes to Conservative governments, only their friends can count on plum jobs.

Our MP made his intentions crystal clear: "In fact, it's worth saying twice: We are going to appoint people who agree with the agenda we intend to implement." It's almost as if he wanted to reinforce for Canadians that his government believes in doling out appointments to its pals.

If you're not Conservative, don't bother applying. Even worse, Pierre wrote a letter into the *Ottawa Sun*, after the fact, just to reiterate that patronage appointments are "common sense."

Nepean-Carleton residents were ashamed at such statements coming from our MP, and we will not forget this arrogance and dishonesty in the next election. Pierre's time is most definitely up.

While Pierre has been trumpeting the RCMP's impending arrival to Barrhaven, he simultaneously dealt a slap in the face not only to the RCMP staff but also to the residents of Barrhaven when he **went into hiding while his former boss, John Baird, sabotaged the light-rail expansion to Barrhaven** with partisan antics against Ottawa's former mayor.

The LRT expansion would have made the downtown more accessible for the residents of Riverside South and Barrhaven, it is far more environmentally friendly than simply adding more buses, and the LRT route would have increased our property values. Instead, our property taxes are going up and the LRT project is dead, thanks in large part to the inaction of our frightened MP, who absolutely refuses to stand up for the interests of this riding.

In February, the Prime Minister decided to **ignore a vote** in the House of Commons calling on the government to **meet the objectives of the Kyoto Accord**. Pierre refuses to stand up for democracy and backs his leader's "cut-and-run" attitude on Kyoto. Curiously, Elgin-Middlesex-London, Ontario Conservative backbencher Joe Preston recently emphasized, "**We believe in Kyoto!**"

This government doesn't seem to know whether it's coming or going, and Poilievre continues to be distracted seeking photo-ops and forgetting about the main interests of this important riding, which includes protecting the environment through the Kyoto Protocol.

OYL AGM REPORT

The Ontario Young Liberal Annual General Meeting at the Kingston Banquet & Conference Centre at Days Inn, opened Friday, March 2 at 6 PM. Mary-Rose Brown and myself attended from Nepean-Carleton. A Cities Agenda discussion with Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing John Gerretsen, the MPP for Kingston & the Islands, started off the event.

Saturday morning saw a discussion of the coming campaign in Ontario with David Gene and Ben Chin, but the room quickly filled up to past capacity afterward as federal Liberal leader Stéphane Dion made an appearance discussing the policy direction and strategy of the Liberal Party, and his speech was followed by a lengthy Q & A session with Young Liberals. Questions were wide ranging and included issues such as the situation in Darfur, university accessibility, the environment, health care and our commitment in Afghanistan.

I was given the opportunity to speak and brought up the issue of our MP in Nepean-Carleton, Pierre Poilievre, and his comments alleging there are extremists and terrorist sympathizers in our caucus. Dion responded that the Liberal Party was disappointed by the accusations and was considering legal action against Poilievre. Dion's speech and responses elicited several standing ovations from the audience.

Lunch was accompanied by a rousing speech on health care by Toronto Centre-Rosedale MPP George Smitherman, who also brought greetings from the premier. The meal was followed by debate over constitutional amendments, which mostly dealt with housekeeping issues but nonetheless provoked meaningful discussion.

The AGM saw Shawn Kerr elected Policy Director of the OYL and Ryan Singh elected Toronto Regional Coordinator. Another highlight was a special YLC Panel on Federal Election Readiness,

which included speakers Cory Pike, Denise Brunson and Brian Clow, as well as an inspirational speech from Senator Rod Zimmer encouraging Young Liberals never to give up and always remain involved in politics to ensure the well-being of the country and the world. The OYL Unlimited Team hosted a "Paint It Red" hospitality suite Saturday night that ran quite late, leading to reduced attendance at the morning session on Sunday, which featured special guest Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House.

Milliken gave a thorough presentation on the role of the Speaker, which includes parliamentary, administrative and diplomatic duties. He spoke of the vast array of receptions, dinners and meetings he attends, on top of managing his constituency. Milliken also took questions, during which he expressed concern about the level of decorum in the House, but says that this Parliament is better behaved than the previous one. He partially blamed the media for purposely broadcasting the worst moments in the House of Commons.

Milliken was amused at a question regarding the Don Cherry controversy, whose recognition in the House brought Conservative applause amid Bloc criticism. He said Cherry was brought in by a bunch of Tories and the Bloc was still angry over the incident.

The closing ceremonies followed Milliken's presentation. About 250 Young Liberal delegates attended the AGM. Popular buttons at the convention were "Kiss Me, I'm a Liberal!", "I (heart) Dalton" and "Stand Up for Kyoto!" Overall, feedback regarding the AGM was overwhelmingly positive.

Mark Johnson

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Questions/Comments? Please feel free to contact Mark Johnson, Editor, at mark.b.johnson@sympatico.ca. He welcomes all feedback!