

OUR VIEW

Tories set hard-right course

In the post-Stephen Harper era, it was clear federal Conservatives were going to have to do some soul-searching.

With Harper in power, political introspection wasn't an option. Party values were defined by the PM, and his people knew better than to object.

In spite of his dour persona, Harper had keen instincts and lofty ambition. He aspired not just to win a couple of elections but to establish a Tory dynasty - to steer Canada ever farther to the political right.

If the goal was going to be achievable, he had no choice but to keep the more radical elements of the party in check, so as not to lose focus of the overarching goal - winning votes from moderates.

So, the vacuum created by Harper's election loss and departure amounted to hitting the reset button for the Tories.

Would the party return to its progressive roots? Should it join the so-called populist movement? What role will social conservatives play without the heavy hand of Harper keeping them at bay?

In the end, the long battle for the leadership boiled down to a libertarian and a social conservative (guess it's safe to say that any progressive leanings are a relic of the past).

A darling of those party members who would embroil the nation in divisive battles over same-sex marriage and abortion, winner Andrew Scheer edged Maxime Bernier 50.95 points to 49.05 points. Bernier, by the way, vowed to end transfers for health care, in effect destroying the Canada Health Act, so you can see where this is going.

One wonders if there's any room left for moderates in the federal Conservative party.

Publicly, Scheer may sidestep the issues that could scare off centre/left-wing voters, but he is deeply indebted to those who would oppose a woman's right to choose.

Jeff Gunnarson, of Campaign Life Coalition, said: "The party must acknowledge that pro-life and pro-family voters are part of the Conservative party's winning coalition, by promoting policies that speak to the values of many Canadians."

Alissa Golob, of RightNow, said: "Andrew has always been a strong pro-life candidate that has defended the rights of members of parliament to freely vote on these issues, as well as bring them up in parliament."

More than a year after the leadership race began, it looks like social conservatives finally have their man.

They will be expecting big things from him in Ottawa.



Harsher penalties required to stamp out aggressive driving

The headlines scream: aggressive driving has spiked 80 per cent.

Where is the law enforcement?

How many lives need to be lost before the streets become safer?

Forget terrorism and "ordinary" crime.

The real danger is just driving to the corner store.

From speeding to tailgating to swerving to non-use of indicator lane changes to closing gaps to outright street racing, there is just bad behaviour on the roads - too many people thinking it's their right to be aggressive, distracted, insensitive or just

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plain careless.

This behaviour needs to be addressed by our politicians right at the root.

Last year, the two daughters of good friends of ours lost their lives due to a head-on crash from a speeding oncoming car that lost control. This tragedy is repeated time and time again and needs to stop.

Here are some solutions:

We need much tougher fines - not just court cases that amount to nothing - for the serious offenders. Yes, absolutely make it a cash grab. Whatever we need to affect change and pay for getting more enforcement and results.

A good pelting from the authorities would be appropriate for some serious offenders. It worked like a charm back in the day to knock sense into people.

Seriously, lives are at stake here.

Tough crimes deserve tough measures.

Also, we need more education in high schools, colleges and universities, at the age when they're starting to drive and feel invincible, and hopefully before they get "set in their ways."

Exposure to aggressive video games, gangsta vibes, superheroes and the like have contributed no doubt in some way.

And, go after the parents of these offenders.

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