

P.C. leadership '83

A convention notebook

Independent/Free Press writer Gord Murray spent three days at the Tory leadership convention in Ottawa attending policy sessions to hear the candidates; listening to the speeches; reading all the literature distributed by the candidates; talking to other media; watching the voting and floor action on Saturday; talking to delegates, observers, alternates and workers from coast to coast; and soaking up the atmosphere of a major political gathering.

by Gord Murray

Graeme Goebelle, a Brampton-Georgetown alternate delegate, performed the roll of a convention buddy. A buddy keeps track of a couple of delegates in other camps, in his case one from the John Crosbie delegation and one David Crombie supporter.

Buddies usually have something in common, similar life experiences. They chat about their common interests, and also discuss a little politics.

Graeme's targets were delegates who might swing to his man, Joe Clark, on the second ballot or even later.

Before the initial conversation ends Goebelle pinned his buddies. In the case of Joe's workers, their targets were given a small blue pin with a white check mark in the middle.

Then the MPs and Senators supporting Joe would circulate the convention looking for Clark pinned buddies. Spotting one, the prominent politician would then try and pitch Joe again.

Brian Cargill, a former prominent Acton Conservative now living in Oakville, was an alternate delegate and didn't get to vote. But he didn't mind a bit.

Brian said he'd been a delegate to leadership conventions three other times and enjoyed being an alternate more.

You see, he was a Brian Mulroney supporter from start to finish, so, while delegates were busy coming and going from the polls Brian was busy working the floor trying to bring delegates over to his man. He never had to leave the fun on the floor.

Brampton-Georgetown delegate Betty Fisher was a Crosbie tracker at the convention. She also worked on her candidate's day by day convention strategy team.

A tracker (Betty also trained other Crosbie workers to be trackers while in Ottawa) spends a lot of their time in Ottawa going from camp to camp spreading "good will."

Betty just presented herself as an individual who was backing Crosbie. "If they like me, think I'm a nice person, maybe they'll be more likely to support John along the way."

Prior to the convention she worked on the Crosbie team doing Ontario delegate profiles.

Janet Gallin, formerly of the Rockwood area, went to the convention as a Clark supporter. Janet moved away from home in 1979 to further her education and attended the convention as a delegate from Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton, Alberta. Her parents June and Jack still live on a farm in the Rockwood area.

There's been a bit of a mystery surrounding Sinclair Stevens ever since we reported the former leadership hopeful and ex-



Sinclair Stevens talks about his brief days in Esqueving Township.

Treasury Board president was born in Esqueving.

Interviewed in Ottawa on the weekend, Sinc confirmed he had been born in Esqueving, but didn't live here long, only until he was about 3-years-old.

He was born in a house in the Boston Church area in the south-west part of the township. Sinc said he believes the house is now owned by Reford Gardhouse, a prominent township resident and sheep (it's really cattle) farmer.

Seems the Stevens family came to Canada from Ireland in 1924 and stayed in Esqueving until about 1930. They were intending to become farmers, but decided it would be better to gain some practical experience working on someone else's farm first.

When the man they were working for moved to Kleinberg in about 1930, they went with him. Now the Stevens clan resides in Kleinberg beside Pierre Berton.

Stevens, by the way, represents Caledon and other communities in Parliament.

Former Halton West MPP, including Acton, George Kerr, was in the Michael Wilson camp at the convention.

However, once the Wilson campaign died and his delegates went to Crosbie and Mulroney (Wilson backed Mulroney), I didn't see George again so I don't know who he backed after that.

Kerr used to be a cabinet minister, but now sits in the legislature as simply a Conservative MPP. He represents Burlington riding.

Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe MP Perrin Beatty was another MP for Clark.

Perrin also was branded a Tory for Life. Anti-abortionists were handing out cards to anyone entering the Civic Centre grounds throughout the convention. These cards



Perrin Beatty, Tory for Life, enjoys the big PC barbecue in Ottawa at the convention Friday.

were a lot like sports collection cards, with the prominent Conservative's photo on the front and a bit about their political career on the back. Tories for Life were big name Conservatives who are against abortion.

I don't know about Perrin, but reportedly some MPs weren't happy with being named as anti-abortionists since polls of the delegates indicated the majority favored abortion.

About planned redistribution changes for his seat after the next federal election, Beatty agreed it will mean he has a little less territory to cover in his sprawling riding, but added quickly "I'll miss it." Beatty's seat will be just Wellington-Dufferin, the Simcoe portion is being split off so he'll lose about 10,000 constituents in Alliston, Adjala and Torsonto Townships.

Former Actonian and the present chairman of Peel Region Frank Bean took in the convention. But he wasn't a delegate, alternate or even an observer. Bean, who kept reminding me Acton was his "old home town," attended as a media person. He writes a column for sisters paper of this publication, The Mississauga News and Brampton Guardian.

This scribbler has seen Joe Clark numerous times (even had my picture taken twice with him, in color once to go with an interview during the 1980 campaign) and I mentioned to both John McDermid, Brampton-Georgetown MP, and Fran Baines of Georgetown, that I'd never seen him so strong and forceful as he was in the policy sessions on Friday.

He'd even stopped flailing his long fingers around and was making points with a partially closed fist.

I suggested he must have been taking speaking style lessons.

Not so, McDermid replied, simply a case of Joe gaining more experience. John noted even Premier Bill Davis wasn't exactly a ball of fire when he started and look at him now, with years of experience under his

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Halton MP Otto Jelinek was a close advisor of eventual winner Brian Mulroney throughout the convention. Rumors seem to have died down that Jelinek will give up his seat so the new leader can run in Halton.



newsmakers

Georgetown/Acton, Wednesday, June 15, 1983



Jim Snow, well known Halton Tory and a member of the provincial cabinet wore John Crosbie colors as well as a button indicating his first choice, Bill Davis, should have run.



John Goebelle, a Brampton-Georgetown youth delegate supported Joe Clark.



Joe Clark's Ontario campaign chairperson, Fran Baines of Georgetown, applauds another MP for Joe joining the fold on Saturday morning. Her joy turned to gloom hours later.



Clark convention chairman John McDermid takes a rare break from working his "duff off" at the Tory barbecue Friday afternoon. McDermid is seen here with Mississauga South MP Don Blenkarn at right. McDermid looked crushed when the final vote was announced and his party had a new leader.

Convention notebook:

Betty maintains Crosbie best man

Betty Fisher kept maintaining there was no need for her to have a second choice because her man, Crosbie, was the best for the job and was going to win. But when he was forced out after the third ballot, Betty, like the majority of Crosbie people, swung behind Mulroney.

She said the Crosbie first ballot figure of 639 was "right on" where they expected, as were Mulroney's and Clark's counts.

The Crosbie camp expected Clark's second ballot strength to be "soft," for Joe to tumble badly on the second vote and a lot of his votes to come over to Crosbie. But Joe's vote wasn't soft, it held quite firmly.

Between the second and third vote, Betty

"corralled" quite a number of Clark supporters and gave them a strong push to dump Joe and move over to John for the third ballot. Just as Newfoundland Premier Brian Peckford did on TV, Betty and others on the floor were telling Clark people they had better swing to Crosbie or watch Joe lose to Mulroney on the last ballot. "They just laughed at me."

Betty explained they were telling Clark people that it didn't even matter if Crosbie went to Clark after the third ballot, few of his delegates would follow.

"It was hard to take the Crosbie loss. I felt he had appeal to the masses and was by far the best man for the job. He would have

given the Canadian people spirit and hope. The best man lost, it makes me shake my head about the political process," the Georgetown school trustee, who also once represented Acton and Esqueving, said.

"What makes me shake my head even more was the inept political thinking of the Clark people. We told them most Crosbie votes would go to Mulroney and they didn't believe us."

She said she felt sorry for Joe, he wound up getting "another pie in the face." Fisher observed Clark's people were so "protective" of their man, who they thought had been wronged so many times in the past.

Betty Fisher of Georgetown worked very hard for John Crosbie but wound up backing Brian Mulroney on the final ballot. She served as a "tracker" at the convention and also worked on a strategy team.