



# OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Liberals will thank the right, again

Clay Downes, Brian Esch, and Rick Malboeuf have begun the public process of vying for the Reform Party nomination in the new federal riding of Halton. John Challinor and Ralph Scholtens have entered the same game for the Progressive Conservatives.

The two processes are interesting for different reasons. None of the Reformers has a particularly high profile. However the two Progressive Conservatives do carry some public recognition as they are both members of municipal governments.

Securing the nomination is largely an exercise in backroom politics because the winner is elected from votes by local party members. Candidates must convince existing members to vote for them and work for them and ideally get votes from new members they convince to sign up.

Party members want someone who they feel will represent their concerns during the campaign and someone whose ear they feel they can bend in the event the candidate wins. Above all they want someone who can win a general election.

The Reform Party held an all-candidates meeting recently and presented their platform to interested members of the public. Reformers, who have been known for blunt speaking and infighting, demonstrated that. One of their number, political newcomer Brian Esch, slammed into his fellow candidates with more zeal than he saved for the ruling Liberals or the rising phoenix of the Progressive Conservatives.

Mr. Esch committed a cardinal sin of politics. He put his own candidacy ahead of the party. Reformers seem a genial lot and they may welcome back Mr. Esch after his serious gaffe. Liberals and Progressive Conservatives are usually not so understanding. Witness Liberal John Nunziata, who carried the ball for the party through the Mulroney years, and was unceremoniously dumped when he refused to toe the Liberal line of rubbish on the GST.

People at the meeting were surprised by Mr. Esch's attacks. He said one candidate was woefully unprepared intellectually for the rigors of being an MP, while the other he labelled unelectable because he had been defeated in prior elections.

Mr. Esch put a lot of stock in his own formal education. He also credited his Christian values as a positive but had no trouble doing unto others, that which I suspect, he would not want



## Reaume with a View

with BRAD REAUME

done to him. Mr. Esch is not the first teacher to place too much stock in formal education. While book learning is important, it is no more important than any other kind.

Much more could be said about Mr. Esch's performance, for which he was woefully unprepared. It included a policy flip-flop and a tangential attack on tolerance and human rights in favour of individual rights. It would serve Mr. Esch's political aspirations substantially if he polished his act before taking it on the road again.

The Progressive Conservative nominees Mr. Scholtens and Mr. Challinor will face off in a riding debate on Tuesday, Jan. 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Muddy Duck. Both candidates have more political experience and they are not about to upset the applecart to get elected.

People from both parties think they can win in the next federal election. They are right. A conservative candidate could easily win Halton in the next go round. However, such a candidate will not win because there will be more than one of them.

The result will be a split vote and the affable Julian Reed will carry the Liberal banner up the centre and stake out a second term and a federal pension. Hey, with pensions from two government sources I'd be affable too.

In fairness Mr. Reed has spend a considerable part of his life representing people in this area and like any employee deserves a pension when the time comes. The Reformers just disagree with the size of that pension.

The political parties are getting themselves organized well in advance of a federal election, which is likely to happen sometime in 1997 but could legally be held off until 1998.

The Liberals don't need a surprise election to win, all they need is the continued existence of two conservative parties.

## Looking Back ...



Hikers who travelled along the Bruce Trail in April 1966 all agreed their lunch never tasted so good as it did after several hours of bush walking. There were 17 hikers in the group that trekked from the Fourth to Seventh Lines of Esquesing and back.

## Program has promise for alcoholics

Living with an alcoholic can be an excruciating experience. It's not just what the alcohol does to his mind and body, nor is it the erratic behaviour, but the disease also destroys any semblance of a family.

Social life decreases and then disappears because no one wants to be with an alcoholic and no one wants to be embarrassed by him. Children stop inviting friends over because they don't want to be humiliated. The alcoholic cannot be counted on for anything — to pick the kids up after school, to pay the bills, to supervise the children at the park. The marriage dissolves because the spouse can't trust the alcoholic and eventually comes to fear him.

The relationship with children turns into something bizarre — if the alcoholic parent is there at all, parenting skills are inconsistent at best, the children don't respect him, don't rely on him, don't share their thoughts and feelings with him.

Worst of all, the alcoholic is probably going to become violent. Research reveals that abuse occurs in 50 to 70 per cent of families where a parent is alcoholic. That parent may in fact love his wife and children, truly love them, but the alcohol makes him impatient, impulsive, and eventually explosive.

There is hope, however, from an innovative new program at Harvard University. The Harvard Counselling for Alcoholics' Marriage Project (Project CALM) was started in 1978 to assess the best methods for helping alcoholics and their families. The director, Dr. Timothy Farrell, has recently reported some preliminary



## Psychology in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

results from a new, specialized treatment program and the findings are extremely positive and cost-effective to boot.

The program is divided into three phases. In the first phase, parents attend 10 to 12 weekly counselling sessions, where the effects of alcohol are discussed, the alcoholic's motivation to drink is explored, support systems are put in place, family treatment programs are designed.

In the second phase, the families attend 10 weekly group sessions with other families of recovering alcoholics. There is something very cathartic about seeing others who have gone through the same thing, seeing that they can do it. It introduces social sanctions, as no one wants to fail in front of others. It motivates the person to abstain. The group sessions not only have a cleansing effect, but they jack up the motivation and the support to help the alcoholic abstain from drinking.

The third phase consists of quarterly visits with a counsellor for a period of two years. Additional sessions can be planned if the need arises. These sessions not only help to support the recovering alcoholic, but they introduce new treatment programs for the family. Every issue, from telling the truth to supervising children, can be addressed as needed. Since the experience of living with an alcoholic has done some serious damage to the marriage relationship, the counsellor emphasizes marital therapy, using behavioural techniques.

The research is not finished and it is too early to tout this as the treatment of choice for alcoholism. It is unclear, for example, how many people dropped out, why they dropped out, and what can be done for them.

The preliminary results are quite impressive, more comprehensive and effective than any other alcoholism program I have seen.

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