

FEDERAL AFFAIRS: Most York Region Tories want Joe Clark as next PC party leader

Clark grabs most local support

BY MIKE ADLER
STAFF WRITER

York Region's Tories — at least those who braved a mild day to vote Saturday — want Joe Clark as their leader.

The former prime minister, whose first-ballot party leadership bid nearly succeeded against four rivals, was voted the most points in all five local ridings.

And he got his most impressive local result — 71 points out of a possible 100 — in the riding of Markham, where Ontario's only Tory MP, Jim Jones, had backed a longshot Brian Pallister.

"We got the highest points for Joe in Ontario," said Ben Seto, Markham riding president and a Clark supporter. "We were off the mark really quick."

Clark's campaign did almost as well in the ridings of Thornhill and Oak Ridges, where he got 63.9 and 61.8 points respectively in the one-member-one-vote contest.

In Vaughan-King-Aurora and York North, however, he failed to get a majority of the points.

York North Tories gave Clark 34.4, voting a surprising 23.2 to anti-free trader David Orchard and 22.4 to Pallister. (In the other York ridings, Orchard got

five points or less.)

Local Orchard and Pallister organizers did a good job getting supporters out, while Clark loyalists probably thought their votes were "in the bag," said riding president John Crossley, also a Clark supporter.

'It was such a gorgeous day I think most people were working on finishing up the garden for the winter.'

Clark got 42.9 in Vaughan-King-Aurora, with Hugh Segal finishing as a strong second at 32.1. Segal came a weaker second in Oak Ridges and Thornhill, third in Markham behind Pallister and fourth in York North.

A fifth candidate, Michael Fortier made no impression at all, getting two votes in the entire region.

Across the country, Clark came close to the 50 per cent he needed to win outright — a satisfying and unexpected result, according to Clark-backer and Thornhill riding president Peter Hooper.

Not reaching that level, however, means Clark will have to re-battle his rivals (except for Fortier) in a second vote Nov. 10.

"A few points across the 301 ridings would've done it," said Oak Ridges president Marjorie Nielson.

Turnout was disappointingly low, a fact party officials attributed to good weather or a feeling there would be a second vote.

"It was such a gorgeous day that I think most people were working on finishing up the garden for the winter," Nielson said.

PROUD OF PROCESS

Although Stouffville resident Ken Prentice, a Segal booster, was disappointed by his candidate's showing, he was proud of the Tory's new, democratic leadership selection process. "None of this back room stuff anymore," he said.

And Orchard's national third-place finish shows the party is broad enough to accommodate different views, he said.

"Clearly, not all Conservatives were in favour of free trade."

Swan song sounds like trumpet

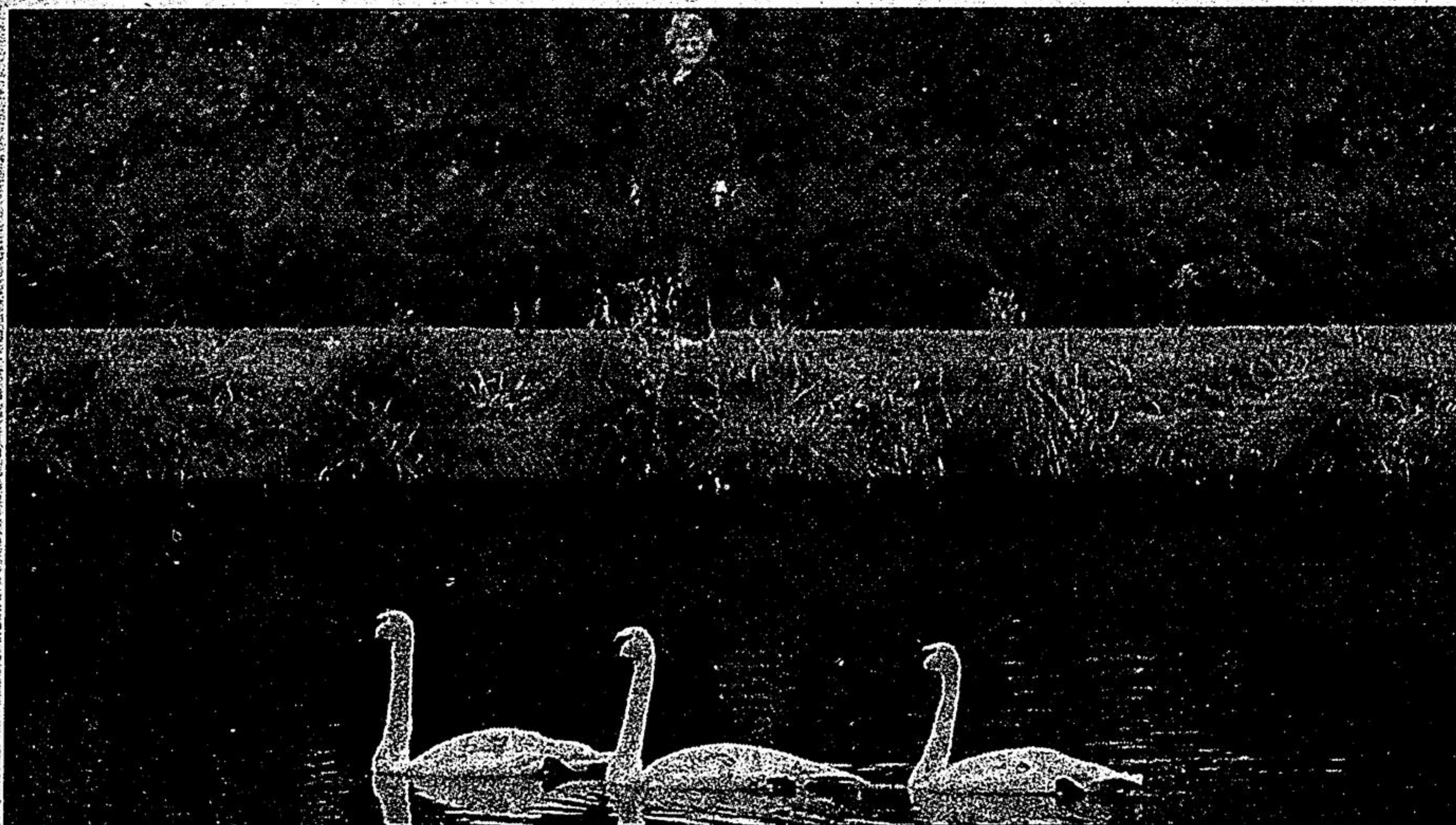
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"We don't own the swans. We are the temporary caretakers," Johnston said.

Locating the lost swan is critical,

Lumsden said. "It's very important that this one is found," he added. The retired biologist has been active in the movement to protect the trumpeter swan since 1982. There are other trumpeter

swans in Stouffville. Swan watchers have spotted a "free flying" pair. Anyone with any information on the missing swan is asked to call Joan Johnston at 640-5015 or Lumsden at 905-727-6492.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Joan Johnston of Bethesda Road in Stouffville watches her three remaining trumpeter swans in the pond in front of her home. She, and husband Al, are hoping someone will locate the bird.

Joan Ransberry

Birth of newspaper reason to celebrate

When a newspaper dies, nobody should gloat. When one is born, everybody should celebrate.

The birth of The National took place today. A heartfelt congrats extended to all. While Big Daddy Conrad Black hands out cigars, the newspaper community is busy counting fingers and toes and wondering if the baby will turn into a giant and knock at least one other out of the industry playpen.

I'm glad The National is finally here. The television advertisement plugging this newspaper annoyed me. More to the point: I didn't get it. My daughter said the style of advertising is geared to a certain type of readership, namely smart people. I'm developing a very cynical viewpoint about children.

Seasoned journalist Walter Stewart, meanwhile, held a dim view of Canada's newspapers. "The usual newspaper in this country is small, unambiguous, prosperous and, in most senses, quite dreadful," Stewart said.

I hold a more optimistic view of the print media — newspapers are like whisky. There's no such thing as a bad newspaper. There's only good and better.

Long-in-the-tooth journalists are quick to say today's newspapers are devoted to the advancement of mediocrity and the gathering of cash. And, it takes no coaxing to get the old scribes to add that yesterday's newspapers were run by people who specialize in words, while today's are the property of those who know how to work the tax laws for maximum benefit.

While studying journalism, the education system failed to mention that a newspaper is run like a business. I learned that on the first day on the job. Actually, I marvel at the fact that this industry can withstand fierce competition and still turn out better profits than the steel industry.

Money matters aside, I continue to believe a good newspaper story matters. I prefer my editors have a nose for news, a forgiving heart and a sense of humour. A reporter should have some talent, lots of spunk and the willingness to admit fault. As well, I think the quality in the newsroom does influence the count of the advertising lineage. Although, I wonder why I bother with it. It's not my gig.

A journalist is supposed to come to work with sound liberal values, a high regard for the truth and know the meaning of fair.

When it comes to investigative reporting, most newspapers shy away from it. Investigative reporting takes time, costs money, makes enemies and causes lawsuits.

In the past decade, the trends in the newspaper business has been towards soft news, towards chain operations and towards the single-newspaper city. With today's birth of The National, this may change.

When it comes to newspapers, everybody's got an opinion. Newspaper people are critical in part and loving in part.

I love newspapers. I spent a three-day weekend with my mother on the family farm. While there, I read every single word in three community newspapers: The Orono Times. Where else would I read that the Allen family traveled to Port Hope to have dinner with the Browns?

I doubt that I'll read that in The National.

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