

PAAC E-News

Public Affairs: Your Online Newsletter

February • 2006

Public Affairs: Your Online Newsletter

February • 2006

- President's Message: I am woman; hear me more
- Conference 2006: Accountability in public service
- Event report: Darrell Bricker and the poisoned chalice
- The Book Man: A high probability of enlightenment
- The web editor: All the dirt on the Kyoto protocol

[President's message](#)

I am woman; hear me more



by Elaine Flis
PAAC President

In the recent general election, as in elections past, advocates for women in politics talked a great deal about the scarcity of women candidates. And once again the focus was on the need to increase the number of candidates running for political parties by breaking down barriers to their participation. Yet we rarely look beyond that, to assess what happens to recruit, motivate and engage women in the political process between elections. Like now.

If democracy is to be truly representative, women must be at the decision-making table, and in significant roles rather than minor ones. But before that can happen at the government level it must happen in the political parties themselves.

A look at party leaders' offices across the country shows a depressing lack of top-level involvement by women. Most female political staff are in supporting roles or are, at best, in middle management positions. An embarrassingly small number are appointed chief of staff to a leader or welcomed into the leader's inner circle. Now, with our new Prime Minister's cabinet unveiled, that lack is once again seen at the top.

Why is lack of women at the top bad for the country? Because it means less innovation in thinking. Psychologists have established that women think differently, communicate differently, digest information differently and provide different views than their male colleagues - views that can challenge the status quo and add a dimension to the discussion that would otherwise be lacking. If progress means going beyond the status quo to achieve change for the better in government, then part of that equation means taking advantage of different thinking, by bringing more women into the top echelons.

Our twenty-second Prime Minister had an opportunity to be a pioneer when he put together his lean 27-member cabinet with 14 women in his minority government to choose from. He selected six. He left out some talented and deserving people, including Alberta MP Diane Ablonczy. She gave Harper and his Tories long years of loyalty.

The Cabinet needed her. The fact that Harper's Conservatives include only those 14 women - just 11 per cent of his caucus - was not something to be reflected in Cabinet; it was a sad statistic to be overcome. Certainly, Mr. Harper went out of his way to include Montreal representation by bringing in Michael Fortier, an unelected lawyer. He went out of his way to raid the Liberals by bringing in David Emerson, apparently to gain representation for Vancouver as well as to avenge the defection of Belinda Stronach. But he did not go the extra mile bring in more women in order to overcome his party's glaring lack of them in caucus. It's not an impressive start to his fragile regime.

Unfortunately, he may not have the opportunity to rectify his mistakes in a future cabinet shuffle - not with his weak minority government's anticipated life span of perhaps one to two years at best. If he succeeds in transforming his minority into a majority, as many pundits predict he will, he will yet have a chance to send a better signal from a party that is traditionally viewed as being the least inclusive of women. It would also pave the way for other parties to do better, not wanting to be seen as less progressive than Tories. It's something to hope for, given the disappointments handed to women this time.

More women at the top would be salutary for the whole of Canadian politics. It would signal to the best and brightest from the other half of the population that politics is not just a man's game, with women brought in for show. It would aid in the recruitment of good women candidates come election time. It would be a great step toward making Canadian democracy truly representative. It is something to work toward.

• • •

Now, it is my pleasure to welcome our newest members to PAAC:

- Derek Fee, IKO Industries Ltd.
- Simon Dwyer, Bell Canada
- Randy Hopkins, Ministry of Government Services

- Michelle Wasylyshen, OMERS

As always, everyone is welcome to contact me with their ideas and input.



[Conference update](#)

2006 Theme: Accountability in public service



*By Ruth Merskey
PAAC Vice President*

Mark your calendars for October 23rd and 24th. Planning is well underway for this year's conference and we're looking forward to a full and challenging symposium. Kim Lynch and Guy Skipworth have joined the conference charge committee and have made substantial contributions already. Kim Donaldson is also working with us now as we identify our topics and speakers for this year's event, which brings me to the primary point of writing.

The Theme for this year is Accountability in Public Service. We welcome ideas and suggestions from the membership regarding topics and speakers. If you would like to participate, please feel free to email me directly or call me at 416 703 6351.

[Event report](#)

Darrell Bricker and the poisoned chalice

The pre-election audience of 130 drawn to our luncheon event by Darrell Bricker on January 20th may have been the largest we've ever had, all of them crowding shank-to-shank into a conference room at the Sutton Place

Hotel in Toronto to hear Bricker read the bones. Bricker is President of Ipsos-Reid Public Affairs, and his presentation was entitled, *Once More Into the Breach: Ipsos-Reid's Views on the Federal Election*.



Event Chair Ian Bacque (left) with guest speaker Darrell Bricker.

"This appears to be an annual event for us," said PAAC President Elaine Flis, introducing Bricker. "It appears the results will be different this year - or will they?" Flis was referring to Bricker's presentation on another pre-election Friday: June 25, 2004, when he stood before us and predicted a Conservative minority government that never got around to happening. Bricker, too was cautious. "I feel like Evel Knievel about to jump the Snake River Canyon," he said at the start. "Last time I crashed my motorcycle."

Both remarks were prophetic. Once again the public mood zigged over the weekend, this time producing not an upset but an unexpectedly weak minority for a Conservative party which at one point in the campaign had visions of a majority dancing in their heads. Still, what Bricker had to say that day rang true on election day, as Paul Martin's lifelong ambition went for that final tumble. "It wasn't about Paul Martin, it was the Liberal regime," Bricker said. "Paul Martin was handed a poisoned chalice."

Ipsos-Reid polling indicated early in the campaign that the public tended to blame Jean Chrétien for the dirt adhering to the Liberals, even though he's gone. All of the scare campaigning against the spectre of a Harper government did little to change that perception - in fact, it may have backfired, Bricker pointed out, when comics like Rick Mercer began to lampoon the Liberal campaign ads with gusto.



Above: (L-R) Bricker, along with Warren Kinsella, Principal of Navigator PPG, and Charlie Angelakos of Labatt's Breweries, have a spirited discussion. **Below:** All three men remained congenial, perhaps agreeing to disagree.



Although the campaign became steadily more aggressive as it progressed, Bricker saw little effect from advertising heading into the last weekend campaign *putsch*. "The last two weeks of the campaign might as well not have happened," he said on the Friday before the 2006 election. "The numbers moved to a ten-point gap two and a half weeks ago, and they haven't moved since." If Bricker knew on that final Friday that the Liberal campaign wasn't working out so well, so did Paul Martin: After committing gaffes with regularity, he was racing around the country imploring NDP and Green Party voters to vote Liberal in order to defeat Harper. Bricker said growing NDP support was soft, which is why Jack Layton was working hard to shore it up, urging his traditional supporters to vote their conscience, while Paul Martin was working hard to slide those votes out from under him. "The Prime Minister is running to the greens and the NDP because he knows Tory voters are rock-solid," Bricker told his audience.

And so it had seemed. Ipsos-Reid had been showing for some time that 58 per cent of those polled nationally did

not want the government to be re-elected - and that was *before* Mr. Justice Gomery blew into town. After Gomery's report became a factor, a key polling question was, did the Liberals learn lessons from the Gomery report, and would they govern better as a result? Forty-five per cent of respondents disagreed with that statement, reported Bricker. "Gomery's exoneration of Martin was believed by the Liberal strategists in Ottawa. It was not believed by the Canadian population."

Bricker added, "There was another question that made my Spidey Sense tingle. Thirty-nine per cent agreed that they would like to see a Conservative minority." That was a telling result, strongly suggesting that people wanted safe change, with a new government kept on a short leash. Which they got. Still, there is no place on a ballot for voters to opt for a minority. Voter choices were influenced by campaign events.



Above: Broadcaster Steve Paikin, who moderated the English language debate, attended with his son Zachary. Bricker told the audience that the woman who cuts his hair said the candidates in the debate did nothing for her, "but that guy asking the questions should run for prime minister."

Bricker said the pivotal event of the campaign was not the Ralph Goodale income trust scandal, as some pundits believed. "Goodale was just one more piece of kindling on a fire that was already burning," said Bricker. The key

event that launched the final trends in party support predated the Goodale scandal. It was Toronto's Boxing Day shoot-out that hit Liberals hardest. "When poor Jane Creba was murdered, that's when the numbers shifted." To illustrate, he displayed a graph, whose lines representing support for the two leading parties spread suddenly apart at precisely that date, like a fork in the road. That was when Paul Martin stood with Toronto Mayor David Miller and gave a sociology lecture, suggesting criminals are depraved because they are deprived - this after the allegedly duntrodden killers escaped in a BMW. The public turned against him then and there. "When the Prime Minister said 'culture of exclusion,' while Stephen Harper said he wanted to punish the criminals, Stephen Harper won." Nor does the fact that Liberals held Toronto while Tories gained only in the 905 region change that analysis. Crime news, said Bricker, always hits harder in the 'burbs. "People in the city are used to it," he said. "It's people in the suburbs who get freaked out."

In 2004 Bricker predicted a Harper minority, then over the weekend five per cent of Ontarians panicked over those scary TV ads and shifted back to the Liberals. This time the fright factor likely came from media coverage. The day Bricker spoke, a Toronto Star headline, PRIME MINISTER FOCUSES ON SOCIAL VALUES appeared over a close-up profile of Paul Martin, his hands spread like a preacher summoning the faithful. THE FIGHT OVER ONTARIO: SEX, RIGHTS AND RELIGION, appeared below the fold. CITY FEARS PROJECTS AT RISK, said another, with a photo of a streetcar and a caption, "some are worried about the future of infrastructure funding for the TTC if Conservatives win." And right next to that, a headline guaranteed to loosen the bowels of all those city folk upon whom Liberals have always depended, who in turn depend on the Toronto Star for their news coverage, and whose willingness to give Harper a try this time was powering Bricker's polling numbers: IS RELIGIOUS RIGHT POISED TO SET HARPER'S AGENDA?

On January 20, Bricker's polling numbers, plugged into his computer "seat modeling" software, which translates percentages to seats, spoke of a Conservative minority in the 149-153 seat range, although he thought shifting trends would push that down to the lower 140s. Liberals would come in at 64-68; NDP 29-33, and BQ around 57-61, he said. Yet the final score was 124 - 103 for the Tories and Grits, with the Bloc knocked down to 51. Only Layton's NDP came in as expected, at a respectable 29 seats.

Bricker's prediction for Atlantic Canada was Tories 11-15, Liberals 14-18, NDP between one and four seats. In fact Team Harper won only 10, the Liberals took 19, and the NDP came within his prediction at three seats.

His prediction for Quebec was 57-61 seats for the Bloc, with the Liberals and Conservatives at six to 10 each. In fact, the Tories did take 10 in Quebec, while the Liberals came in higher than predicted at 14, but still down from the 21 they won last time.

In the GTA area, he predicted the Liberals would win 22-24 seats, Conservatives 11-13, and NDP two to four seats, while outside the GTA, Harper would rake in 45-47 seats, the NDP would take 13-15 and the Liberals from seven to nine. Yet Harper's team was shut out of Toronto entirely, and won only 40 seats outside the GTA. The NDP took 13 in that area, as expected. So Ontario was where the Harperphobic shift took place among voters who couldn't have missed those Star headlines.

Bricker's prediction for Alberta, a 28-seat Tory sweep, was accurate. His prediction for Manitoba and Saskatchewan was also accurate: He said it would be Tories 20-24, between one and four for the Grits, and from one to six for the NDP. Actual result: Tories 20, Grits four and NDP four. In British Columbia his prediction was Conservatives 21-25, Liberals four to eight, NDP five to nine. The actual result was only 18 for the Conservatives, with Liberals on target at seven, and NDP better than expected, with 11 seats.

So despite the weaker minority result than predicted, Bricker's regional breakdowns weren't that far off at all. Therefore, the reasons he offered for the minority Tory win likely represent valid observations. Paul Martin, observed Bricker, ran an American-sounding campaign, talking about the Supreme Court, which was not really an issue with the public, and making that silly remark about abolishing the Notwithstanding Clause, a feature of our constitution which few people even understand or care about. Bricker's favorite quip of the day was that Martin sounded more like a character on *The West Wing* than a candidate for Canadian public office.

Martin committed several foolish gaffes, such as going down to Toronto's worst gang-plagued area with a promise to ban all guns, in a country where everybody with an IQ larger than their shoe size knows the handguns preferred by street gangs have been effectively banned since 1937. This prompted both anger and horselaughs - Toronto Star humourist Linwood Barclay, for example, responded that while Martin was at it he should ban murder too. Martin's campaign problems, left unresolved according to Bricker, were the four Gs: Gomery, Guns, Gaffes, and Goodale. To that list a cynic might wish to add Graft. "Paul Martin needed the Gomery report to cleanse him, and it didn't."

Yet once again, the actual result veered away from Bricker's poll predictions as the result of a last-minute shift in Ontario. The pollees didn't lie to Ipsos-Reid. They were pushed once again by the Fear Factor, not so much by ads this time as by media coverage which played on an ingrained distrust of Stephen Harper. Paul Martin may have been handed a poisoned chalice by Jean Chrétien, but Darrell Bricker was handed a poisoned chalice by the Ontario polling respondents, a.k.a. the voters. He was forced, by the nature of his science, to base his numbers on how those respondents answered the questions - respondents who afterwards remained skittish enough to jump left when somebody yelled BOO. Once again a blue tide was stemmed, but not enough to save Paul Martin. The Conservatives have now formed a government, albeit weaker than expected. Bricker said Canadians wanted safe change, and not even the mightiest of the liberal media were strong enough to stem *that* tide.

What's next for Canada? Expect the new crop of MPs to act collegial and cooperative for a short time, followed by eighteen months or so worth of hamstrung parliament and political eye-gouging as the Conservatives try to get popular things done, while Her Majesty's Official Obstruction works to make them look inept, incompetent or evil.

What's next for Paul Martin? Something besides politics. The man forced to wait out the best years of his political life for former friend cum bitter enemy Jean Chrétien to go away, decided to commit political seppuku, rather than let the party lop off his head. Chrétien's revenge is now complete.

What's next for the Liberals? Surprisingly, a Liberal campaigner, interviewed separately, was not glum at all. "I feel great," the source said. The reason: This outcome represents a chance for the Liberal party to repair the old Chrétien/Martin divisions and bring all members together under the same tent. That's an insider's opinion. An outsider might also observe that it's a chance for the party to truly cleanse itself of the corruption scandals. When the next election comes around, nobody will be able to whine about Liberal corruption anymore. That score is now settled, and the political debate will be about issues.

What's next for Prime Minister Stephen Harper? A chance to show he's not a monster. What's next for the media is closely bound up with that: A lot of media people went out of their way to predict horrors under a Stephen Harper government. Those horrors cannot now materialize in such a fractious parliament. Eighteen months down the road, frightening the public with the same dire tales, told in advertising or in headlines, will be like trying to

frighten an audience with a scary movie they've already seen. Twice.

-D.S.

[The Book Man](#)

A high probability of enlightenment



by Stewart Kiff

Election 2006 - The Untold Story: Inside an Epic Battle, Secret Strategies, Backroom Blunders & Private Crises by Paul Wells, in a *Maclean's* Magazine Special Edition.

Mark Twain said that newspapers were the first draft of history, and this was painfully obvious in the days after the recent Federal Election. True insight was not to be found in either the post-election analysis of the *Globe*, the *Star* or the *Post*. Although there were no outright lies or damned lies, nothing I read then really struck me as particularly insightful or entertaining.

But *Maclean's* Magazine produced a Special Edition for the federal election 2006 featuring an in-depth article by journalist and blogger Paul Wells, called *The Untold Story: Inside an Epic Battle, Secret Strategies, Backroom Blunders & Private Crises*. It's so good I'm reviewing it here where I usually review books. The magazine should be available on newsstands until the end of the month.

This essay is a wonderful breath of fresh air, featuring vibrant, clear writing and solid research. Wells' writing is an informative mix of observation, reportage and detailed accounts from key insiders. He chronicles the Liberal missteps with only a small amount of glee, and though the Conservatives have made great strides, Wells does not fail to notice their stumbles on the way to the finish line. One shortcoming may be the lack of voices from the other two parties. Though the NDP provides some colour, especially regarding Buzz Hargrove, the story of the Bloc and the inroads the Conservatives have made in Quebec could have been dealt with at greater length.

Wells cites a relatively unknown analyst, Patrick Murrat of Navigator Ltd., as the source of the Conservatives' innovative 2006 election strategy, which focused on tax breaks for specific parts of the population. He also reports that Harper laid the groundwork for the strategy during the summer of 2004, amid brutal "beat-up" sessions he endured with Murrat and his brain trust.

Wells ties the events of the election into a coherent narrative arc that is highly readable. It's the kind of thing that yields more value on second and third readings. Congratulations to *Maclean's* for successfully making such a

valuable contribution to Canadian political discourse. To read the full story that begins with the link above, you'll need to subscribe to their online edition. Otherwise, get a hard copy and read it while it's available.

Highly recommended

Struck by Lightning: The Curious World of Probabilities

by Jeffery S. Rosenthal

While our profession makes much use of statistics, many of us don't truly understand what the numbers are really saying. Then at some point we realize that in order to master an upcoming briefing we need to know more. Enter this new book by University of Toronto professor Jeffrey S. Rosenthal. It is a highly readable work and as entertaining as these things can get. As a work of popular science it succeeds in being an accessible way for the reader to enter into the world of probability and statistical analysis.

Rosenthal begins by disarming the reader with some easy and fairly common instances of probability and coincidence that anyone can relate to. He then moves on to the form of probability with which we are all most familiar - gambling - and what the real odds are in casino games like craps and roulette. For any of us occasionally tempted into thinking we could make it as a professional gambler, this section alone is worth the price of the book: He details how casinos will *always* win in the long run.

But this book becomes truly valuable when Rosenthal writes in detail about how commonly used statistics, murder rates, public opinion polls, survey research are misused and abused. He keeps his focus on practical issues; for example, his discussion of how probability tools help in creating software to block spam email.

PAAC members will appreciate that Rosenthal is a Toronto author writing from a Canadian perspective. When he talks about murder rates, for example, he uses the Canadian statistic. The book's Canadian relevance is especially welcome.

Highly recommended

Stewart Kiff is the Toronto Vice-President of Equinox Public Affairs. He welcomes your feedback and suggestions, and can be reached at stewart@equinoxinc.ca.

[The Web Editor's corner](#)

All the dirt on the Kyoto protocol

by David Silburt
PAAC Web Editor

There is a great deal of misinformed public opinion concerning the Kyoto Protocol, who is for it, who is against it,

and why. Leading up to the election, most Canadians were convinced by skilled news management professionals that A) It's a plan to save the planet from catastrophic climate change, and B) Anyone who is against it speaks for industrial lobbies dedicated to sweeping aside environmental controls in favour of untrammelled industry. The widespread acceptance of this view represents a triumph of public affairs. But it is not a high point for education.

There is a legitimate school of scientific thought that climate change is part of a natural cycle which predates mankind, but that's an issue for another occasion. There is scientific doubt whether human industry is even capable of having a measurable impact on climate, but we can save that for later, too. The most widespread belief is that global warming is catastrophic and human-induced, and that it can be reversed by humans. Therefore we have the Kyoto Protocol, a pact among nations attempting to reconcile environmental concerns with economic ones. It sets mandatory targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2012. These targets differ among the various signing nations.

Nations with larger and more advanced economies are obliged to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions i.e., the burning of fuels, by greater amounts. Those with less developed economies have more moderate reduction goals, to soften the economic hardship. Those with underdeveloped economies are permitted to increase their pollution by controlled amounts, in pursuit of increased industrial development.

Most significantly, nations which exceed their Kyoto reduction targets can sell others the right to produce those extra pollutants. That's right: The polluters can buy "carbon credits," which might be more rightly called pollution points. Something called the Canadian Climate Exchange has already been set up in Montreal, to be the clearing house through which Canadian companies can buy and sell pollution points among themselves, beginning later this year. Similar exchanges will operate between nations. Suppose Canada exceeds its greenhouse gas reduction goals by an amount equal to X pollution points. The government can then sell those points to The People's Republic Of Poison, which can then fire up its sweatshops and tar-pits and smokestacks to produce all the air-dirt that wasn't produced here because Canada achieved more reductions than Kyoto said we must.

Under Kyoto, nations with economies in crisis, which have factories closing down for other reasons, will also sell their pollution points for cash to developing nations that want to build more factories. Thanks to this points system, which encourages nations to use their pollution points to win cash and valuable prizes, the Kyoto Protocol ensures that no worldwide progress can be made beyond the extremely moderate - and quite possibly ineffective - goals set by the agreement itself. That's what advanced anti-Kyoto nations oppose. Rather than coming solely from those who want untrammelled industry, much of the opposition to Kyoto comes from those who don't like the points system because it limits progress in worldwide pollution reduction.

The Paul Martin government signed the Kyoto Protocol, knowing that, as an advanced nation, we can meet and then exceed our Kyoto commitments in two ways. First, the government could establish a 'Carbon Tax' to discourage any activity that involves burning fuels - heating homes, running factories, driving automobiles - by imposing a cost penalty. Opposition to this could be defeated by saying it's being done to save the planet. Second and more long-term, this nation has the ability to develop and implement new technologies which are cleaner than the old ones. The government would be able to introduce measures to encourage such development.

When these initiatives lead to Canada exceeding its goals under the Kyoto Protocol, we would then have pollution points to sell to developing nations that wish to increase their own pollution for economic reasons. These customer nations would then pay us for the right to pollute by an amount equal to the amount by which we

exceeded our clean air commitments. By these means, the government of Canada would gain new income from twin revenue streams: The carbon tax and the sale of polluting rights to the Third World.

The Liberals were in favour of this. The Conservatives said they would set it aside, as the Americans and the Australians have done, in favour of the freedom to do better at reducing pollution than the Kyoto Protocol permits. They did a remarkably poor job of articulating their reasons before the election. Thus, the Liberals had a public relations advantage on the issue, telling the public that they support Kyoto because they hold the environment holy, while their opponents were intent on joining the Americans in a campaign to increase pollution for the sake of making money. Despite their defeat on other issues, they achieved a triumph of news management on this particular issue.

Will the Conservatives now be able to follow through with an alternative to Kyoto, and do a better job telling the public the reasons? Just watch them. Should NDP commitments hold firm, then if Prime Minister Harper wants to take the Kyoto Protocol away he'll have to pry it from Jack Layton's cold, dead fingers.

To do that, he'll have to hire some skilled public affairs professionals to convince the public the Tories have a better idea.

Have your say

We welcome member input, whether it's a letter to the editor, a story suggestion or a proposal for a guest column. Feel free to email your input or suggestions to us. All submissions for publication on this site are subject to approval by the Editorial Board.

Editorial Board: Elaine Flis, Ruth Merskey, Chris Benedetti, **Chris Churchill**, Graham Murray.

Writer/Editor: David Silburt

Public Affairs is E-published by the Public Affairs Association of Canada
100 Adelaide St. West, Suite 705
Toronto, ON
M5H 1S3

Tel: 416-367-2223 • Fax: 416-367-3778