



PAAC

E-News

Public Affairs: Your Online Newsletter

December • 2005

- **President's Message: Public Policy benefits from expert GR**
- **Background: The genesis of our Statement of Ethical Principles**
- **Election 2005-2006: Oh, yes...there will be mud**
- **Event report: Big red Grit machine, clearer than you've ever seen**
- **The view from here: Strange things done in the midnight sun**
- **The web editor: A Top Ten List for cynics**

[President's message](#)

Public policy benefits from expert GR



by Elaine Flis

PAAC President

The election campaign now thrust upon us will have ethics as its theme, at least in part. And if the past is an indicator, those who raise the issue of ethics will speak of yet more restrictions and constrictions on the practice of government relations, as if lobbyists are the prime ethical villains in politics. It's a misguided attitude, but one we should expect, and be prepared to refute.

Some people today find it politically expedient to suggest further restrictions on who can work as a lobbyist, including a decree that nobody may do so

within five years of having worked in politics or government. It's an alarming prospect if it gains support, and not because it could put good lobbyists out of work. It's alarming because it could degrade the quality of government relations, which is an important and necessary component of public policy-building and democracy. We should all bear the facts in mind, in case people begin the silly talk in our midst.

We should be ready to remind people that, for example, the law is a complex thing, requiring the services of a lawyer to help people navigate their way through it. Yet nobody suggests that people less than five years out of law school should be barred from joining the bar association in the name of ethics. Even Shakespeare was only joking when he had a character, a follower of anarchist Jack Cade in *Henry VI*, say, "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." In fact, when you need a lawyer, there is no suitable substitute.

The same is true of government relations professionals, commonly called lobbyists. Government is complicated, and those who wish to have their say in the creation of public policy need experienced help navigating their way through it. Far from being an illicit or underhanded thing, GR, done properly by experienced people, is what lets citizen groups and organizations have a say concerning matters in which they *should* have a say. To say that people with recent, relevant experience in the process should be barred from it is wrong-headed. None of us should be shy of telling people about that in these contentious times.

We should remind people that elected officials cannot possibly be experts in all areas of public policy. Officials are elected to represent a constituency, and in whatever portfolio they hold, they must rely on research and advice to be informed in the areas where they work.

To effectively communicate with elected officials requires someone with an understanding of stakeholder involvement, a knowledge of how decisions are made, an appreciation of the time constraints on bureaucrats and elected officials, and the skills to cut through with a message to elected people who have a responsibility to listen to all sides before they make a decision. It is honourable work.

Are there those who act dishonourably in their work? Certainly. There are crooked police officers, unprincipled lawyers, unethical politicians and other

ethically challenged people in every profession. The antidote is for any and all professions to buckle down to govern themselves with a view to encouraging ethical behaviour, as PAAC has done with the introduction of its Statement of Ethical Principles (see the story, below).

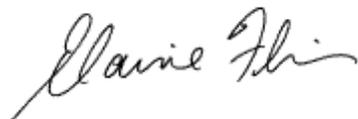
If politicians want to do something similar, they'll get no argument from this organization. But public affairs professionals, including those in GR, can hold their heads high when the talk turns to ethics. If somebody tells you anything different in the heat of the coming campaign, set them straight.

•••

And now, I'd like to welcome our newest members to the Association:

- Michael Scott, Oak Ridge Moraine Foundation
- Dino Rocca, Ministry of Economic Development & Trade
- Sabrina Hoque, student
- Vonnie Barron, Heart & Stroke Foundation
- David Gavsie, Alcohol & Gaming Commission
- Paula Konstantinidis, Alcohol & Gaming Commission
- Karen Homer, World Vision
- Saurabh Popat, Ontario Pharmacists Association
- Barbara Chapin, Nova Chem
- Gillian Hewitt, Aeroplan
- Jack Maguire, student, University of London

As is always the case, new and established members should feel free to contact me with ideas and input, at eflis@enterprisecanada.com



[Background](#)

The genesis of our Statement of Ethical Principles



by Ruth Merskey
PAAC Vice President

About two and a half years ago, PAAC Past President Chris Benedetti sat down with a dozen or so Public Affairs professionals to discuss the need for a Code of Ethics in the industry. Among them were representatives from the major communications firms and government relations specialists. They agreed the time had come to start addressing the gap between regulation, law, professional practice and public perception.

From the beginning, it was apparent that a Code of Ethics would need to be supported by a regulatory and adherence system. Enforcement mechanisms are usually managed through accrediting or governing bodies. Granted, there are significant legal obligations under which Public Affairs and, particularly, lobbyists must function, but there is a dearth of material with respect to the nuances. In addition, practitioners come from multiple fields and carry external professional responsibilities and allegiances. To anticipate their adherence to yet another set of obligatory standards is complex at best. How then to define an acceptable common ground?

A Statement of Ethical Principles, an articulation of expectation and good practice in voluntary measure seemed the best solution; so we worked toward that end, identifying principles of high standard with respect to universal professional obligations, adjusting them within the specific framework of Public Affairs - in its many forms - to draft this Statement. We had to consider who might be affected by it, and how they could be expected to carry its obligations. The negotiations were interesting and yet, for a disparate group

of stakeholders, there was a general consensus about the approach. The wish to see in place a workable document took precedence and so, with some modification - though not a great deal - it was presented to the membership.

Ratified in short order at the AGM 2005, the Statement now leaves us with the question of where to look next. The issue of contingency fees has been identified for further discussion, so too is the idea of an accreditation system - how it might build progress within the industry and what role the Statement can play in that.

Stay tuned.

Ruth Merskey, now Vice President of the PAAC Board of Directors, was the writer and architect of the Association's Statement of Ethical Principles. She can be reached at ruth.merskey@sympatico.ca

[Election 2005-2006](#)

Oh, yes...there will be mud

Early evening, 28 November 2005. A cold rain is pecking at the windows as the television drones on. On screen, in a room lit by those awful lights some people call putrescent fluorescents, which give human faces a greenish cast, men and women in business attire are rising one after another, nodding their heads in answer to a voice that prattles away first in French, then English. But what is really happening is that one M.P. after another is sticking a knife into the bleeding, staggering Paul Martin government. Blade number 155, the critical one, is inserted by former NDP leader Ed Broadbent. It enters Paul Martin through his left kidney and pokes out through his navel. Or so it might have seemed, watching that telecast with the right kind of eyes. The Paul Martin minority is over. After 17 months of acrimony and political kung-fu. After Martin bought Belinda Stronach for a seat in Cabinet, to stave off a spring defeat. Now she is just a candidate about to face an angry constituency. Darrell Bricker, who was on hand at Global TV to read the bones, said we might be looking at Election 2004 all over again. Little has changed, but the stakes are greater for some. Harper and Martin both have their careers on the headsman's block. Paul Martin's leadership cannot survive another minority result. Harper has to win one, not for the Gipper but

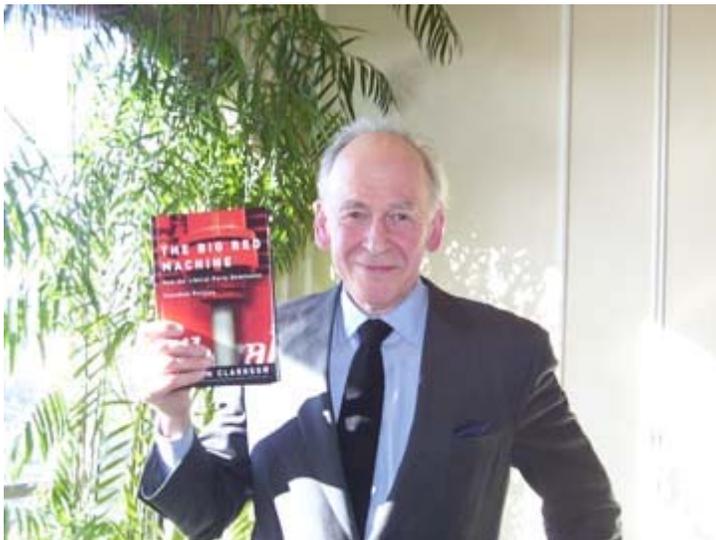
for himself, or the Conservatives will offload him. Jack Layton can afford to be a gentleman, as he positions himself to welcome disaffected Liberal voters. Gilles Duceppe can concentrate on political cleansing in Quebec. But Harper and Martin are backed into a corner, and mud will fly, say the pundits. This could be a repeat of the last election, only it could get dirtier. It could get nastier. The public might be offended, but writers, columnists, and news junkies will love it. The outcome is in doubt, but not the style. The gloves are off. Oh, yes. There will be mud.

-D.S._

[Event report](#)

Big red Grit machine, clearer than you've ever seen

On November 22, with Opposition parties snarling and slaving and preparing to spring at the throats of Paul Martin's scandal-befouled Liberals, our PAAC luncheon event featured Stephen Clarkson, Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto, talking about his new book: *The Big Red Machine: How The Liberal Party Dominates Canadian Politics*.



A buy-the-book speaker - Prof. Clarkson shows a hardcover copy of his new book. The hardcover is about \$57 at Chapters (that's where the hot link above will take you) but they also have it in soft cover for about \$17 - Ed

The timing? Clarkson's book was five years in the making, yet thanks to a gift from the timing gods, it just happened to have appeared on the eve of an election and of what Clarkson impishly called, "yet another dose of Gomerrhea."

It was a better turn of phrase, perhaps, than Clarkson may have intended. Gonorrhoea the disease, remember, can be treated by a hefty three-gram dose of high-powered penicillin, and that has a political analogue. Liberals, after all, have run this country for 78 of the last 110 years, won 20 of the last 29 elections, and have always been seen as "the government party," save for the occasional interregnum. Why?

Clarkson said he always had this mental image of a Big Red Machine - something Rube Goldbergesque in its complexity and mystery, working behind the scenes. No wonder he did. The once-powerful Cincinnati Reds baseball team was called that in its heyday by sports writers, and in 1971 Toronto journalist and baseball aficionado Claire Hoy dubbed the then-powerful Ontario Tories 'The Big Blue Machine.' The Red Machine term for Liberals later flowed from that. Regardless of the term's antecedents, it seems to fit; it generates the image of a strange and powerful machine chugging and chuffing away in the background, generating the perennial success of the Liberals. Clarkson sees this machine as essentially a political formula. Liberals, he said, have always had both a national vision and a social vision, and people respond to those things. But along with their very saleable visions, Liberals long ago developed a practical political style.

"Seize and keep Quebec as the base," has long been the key to their political style, he said. So was the Liberal knack for developing policies that would continue to keep the business community happy, and thus keep them donating to the party. Add the Liberal ability to attract good candidates, and you have a formula that has only failed to keep them in power if the machine broke down - such as if they failed to keep the business community in a good mood. Those points represent the traditional view of the longstanding Liberal political strength. But, said Clarkson, these days, "it's a little thin as an explanation."

The colour of blood

The question these days is not why Liberals always win; it's why Conservatives keep losing. Clarkson detailed the reasons, and as he did it became clear why the Liberal colour is red, the shade of oxygen-rich arterial blood, while the Conservatives are symbolized in blue, the colour of blood with the oxygen exhausted. Conservatives, he said, consistently wind up with lacklustre leaders and poor candidates because they attract people with a desire to be in Opposition so that they can criticize and be quoted in their local press as champions of their constituents. That's their goal, and it's an attitude that perfectly suits them to lose elections. "You can say the reverse about the Liberals," Clarkson said. They attract good candidates, with a winning mentality - they want and fully expect to govern. And if that includes a grand sense of entitlement, a feeling that they will be rewarded by appointment to the Senate or some other sinecure, it's part of the package. This last observation of Clarkson's was telling, because it neatly dovetails his view of Liberal success with a likely reason behind their current troubles.

As Clarkson spoke, his words called up image after image of what has historically gone right when Liberals win, and what goes wrong for them when they're in trouble. "The leadership tends to be strong," Clarkson said. "The party has been more adept at adapting to change," he added, whether it was the influx of immigrants, the ascendancy of women as a political force, or simply the changing desires and moods of the public. Internal squabbles in the Liberal party have traditionally been handled internally, while they presented a united front to the public.

Conservatives don't win in Canada; Liberals lose. In 1979 Joe Clark managed to blow up in his own face. In 1984 John Turner lost HUGE to Brian Mulroney because Mulroney cultivated a Liberal-style solidarity and shiny, appealing candidates while Liberals fought among themselves.

Does this mean the Liberals are going down in the '05-'06 fight? "I think Harper will win," Clarkson said, but added: "The Liberals will be back in power soon after." The reason: Liberals remain strong in the back rooms, strong on candidates, and famously resilient. Further, he said, when Liberals lose, they're second, not dead last, and well positioned for comebacks. "They cannot be counted out, even if under Mr. Dithers they lose this time."

It's an interesting view, and a cheery one for Liberal supporters feeling glum about their current fortunes. But some of the old-time Liberal strengths Clarkson described early in his presentation no longer apply. Such as, for example: Quebec. They used to be able to count on it; now they must do without it. During the Question and Answer session following Clarkson's presentation, he admitted this, saying, "It's astonishing that Paul Martin is attacking Dalton McGuinty, when he has already lost Quebec." Yet in the ensuing discussion, possible reasons emerged. After all, when voters are angry with a party provincially, they often take it out on their federal brethren. So if Premier McGuinty is still disliked for broken promises, kicking him around could be sound politics for Paul Martin in an election where he must win Ontario to carry the day.

The media factor

There is also the Media Factor. The days when newspapers were content to report the news are long past. Political journalists fight elections as hard as political campaigners do. "In 2004 Jeffrey Simpson defeated Stephen Harper," Clarkson declared. Indeed, when the media began saying that the Conservatives had momentum - a holy phrase in campaigns - *Globe and Mail* National Affairs columnist Simpson came out of his corner like a bull out of a barn, writing that it was time to stop giving Harper an easy time of it. Clarkson's theory is that Simpson is a leader in a trade characterized by a pack mentality, and the national press just fell upon Harper because Simpson did. This is the reason why, when Harper read all those reports of his "momentum" and started talking about having a transition team, he earned a blast of media ridicule, despite the clear fact that a candidate in the lead would be foolish *not* to have such a team. "The coverage of Stephen Harper lost him the election," said Clarkson. "That's a fact I can document."

Clarkson also thinks the media have collective moods, so he believes they'll go easier on Harper this time around. That's his theory. Other watchers believe the liberal media have been honing their daggers for months, with visions of Conservative blood dancing in their heads. Clarkson thinks there is a right-wing bias in the media. Others have written of a pronounced left-wing media bias. We'll see.

A mudslinging campaign

One thing is for sure: These times are not old times. An audience member earned some chuckles when he quoted the late, great Jack Pickersgill, who said of Conservatives, "They are like mumps. They come around once for each generation." But let's not kid ourselves. This will be a mudslinging campaign featuring mud that sticks. And with Quebec no longer in the Liberal corner, Conservatives are more of a threat than a case of mumps. Still, Clarkson nailed it when he said this election, as others he has studied, is for the Liberals to lose. "Governments get defeated; it's not Oppositions who get elected," he told his audience. "You have to shoot yourself in the foot."

-

[The view from the Yukon](#)

Strange things done in the midnight sun by those who moil for public affairs



by Anthony DeLorenzo

This is not the Toronto of the north. Look around you, I drive in from Marsh Lake every day. Nineteen miles south of here it says "Entering the City of Whitehorse." If trees were people maybe, but that's it. There is no Toronto of the north. Don't let anybody try and kid you.

**-George Henry, Council of Yukon First Nations,
remarks made during 2000 CRTC hearings**

I used that quote in a paper five years ago and it has stuck with me ever since. It speaks to something you hear quite often: "These people from down south just don't get it. Things are different here."

In fact, Yukon is different, and not just because none of us have Blackberries or because the rush-hour drive to work takes about five minutes. Yukon is a wholly unique context for governance and public affairs.

Fear not, PAAC colleagues. As my contribution to the view from the Yukon, I offer you a little of our history, geography and current affairs. Armed with this knowledge, even the most "Cheechako" southerner can be well prepared to survive our often harsh but always interesting public affairs landscape.

History

Our current political landscape was largely formed by three key events: achieving responsible government in 1979, signing the Umbrella Final Agreement with Yukon First Nations in 1993 and the passage of the *Yukon Act* in 2002.

In 1979 the Yukon achieved responsible territorial government. Prior to that, we had been governed by a commissioner appointed by the Department of Indian and Northern Development who was advised by a locally elected council. A legacy of Joe Clark's short-lived government was the Epp letter, in which DIAND Minister Jake Epp transferred executive power from the commissioner to the legislative assembly. Until recently, this letter formed the basis of Yukon's responsible government.

In 1993 the *Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement* changed the political landscape forever. It culminated a twenty-year process that began when Yukon Elder Elijah Smith presented the historic document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to Pierre Trudeau and his northern affairs minister Jean Chretien. The umbrella agreement, a first in Canada, laid out the framework for aboriginal self-governance. Since 1993, 11 of 14 Yukon First Nations have signed self-government agreements under that framework.

The final milestone was the passage of the federal *Yukon Act* in 2002. The authority of the legislature finally became recognized in federal law, and the Yukon also achieved "devolution" of province-like powers including responsibility for natural resources. While there are key differences - a notable one is that the Yukon's authority resides in the Act, rather than in the constitution - today's Yukon is very similar to a province in terms of responsibility and relationship to the federation. As a result, over the past few

years the territory has been given greater recognition and participation in first ministers meetings and other business of the federation.

Geography

The Yukon may appear as a vast, lifeless expanse of trees and mountains. Those of us who have spent time out on the land know that our boreal landscape is rich and diverse, well-adapted to our harsh climate and home to a fascinating variety of plant and animal life. Much the same can be said for the Yukon's public affairs landscape. If you want to do business up here, you'd best get the lay of the land.

The Yukon is large and sparsely populated. Roughly 31,000 people inhabit an area half the size of the entire province of Ontario. Most people live in Whitehorse, the economic and administrative capital, and one quarter belong to a First Nation.

Thanks to our small population, our politicians aren't some talking head on the six o'clock television news - they're your neighbour, in line in front of you at the grocery store or sitting at the next table for an after-work drink. People expect their politicians to be accessible, whether they are cabinet ministers or town councilors. Grassroots lobbying is generally very effective at setting the public agenda and getting the ear of decision-makers.

Our physical landscape is not only a good analogy, but in large part underlies our values and helps shape our public policy. With few exceptions, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal Yukoners are very close to the land. We fish, hunt, garden, hike, bike, ski, snowmobile, paddle, camp... you get the idea. First Nation culture, respect for the land and traditional knowledge are important elements of public policy.

Current Affairs

The Yukon's admittedly complex public affairs landscape is still rapidly evolving. No one can say how things will look in five, ten or twenty years, but it would be impossible to argue they will be very different than they are today.

One thing that is abundantly clear is that First Nations are now a distinct order of government in the Yukon. Under self-government agreements, there are very clear obligations for consultation, government-to-government relations,

joint decision making through bodies such as renewable resource councils, and transfers of responsibility for programs and services.

What is not clear is how this is eventually going to look. Most First Nation governments are still building capacity to take on greater responsibilities. It seems likely that in the future, First Nation governments will have individual mixtures of direct responsibility (draw-down powers), bilateral agreements with the federal or territorial government, and tri-partite agreements among all three parties.

The territorial government also continues to evolve as it adapts to its growing responsibility achieved through devolution while also working to develop effective relationships with First Nation governments.

Regarding the latter, Yukon and self-governing First Nations have, through legislation, recently established the Yukon Forum committing the territorial cabinet to meet regularly with First Nation chiefs to develop common positions.

The federal government's hands-on presence in the territory has become noticeably reduced, while at the same time federal dollars are flowing into the Yukon at historic levels through increased federal transfers, settlement of land claims, the Northern Strategy, infrastructure programs, economic development agreements and the 2007 Canada Winter Games to be held in Whitehorse.

Not to be overlooked in this picture are the Yukon's eight incorporated municipalities and various unincorporated communities, all of them located within First Nation traditional territories and in many cases with settled land claims that overlap their boundaries.

Finally, a critical piece of self-government agreements is the newly-proclaimed *Yukon Socio-economic and Environmental Assessment Act* or YESAA, which establishes a single arms-length body to administer assessments on behalf federal, territorial and First Nation governments. YESAA is something that anyone involved with development projects in the Yukon will need to be aware of.

Conclusion

That's the Yukon's political and social context, in a nutshell. I'm not going to give you a lot of specific advice when it comes to doing business in the Yukon. More than anything, it often comes down to attitude. We take pride in being the colourful 0.1 per cent. Resign yourself to people showing up late for meetings, laughing that you're bundled up when it's only 20 below out, and nobody wearing ties.

Oh yes, most important - leave the Blackberry at home. They don't work up here anyway.

Anthony DeLorenzo works for the Yukon government, until recently in public relations and now in community affairs. He lives in Whitehorse with his wonderful fiancée Sierra and his not-so-wonderful dog Starbuck. He can be reached at anthony.delorenzo@gov.yk.ca

-

[The Web Editor's corner](#)

A Top Ten List for cynics

*by David Silburt
PAAC Web Editor*

The top ten list of reasons why cynicism was the right way to think in 2005:

10. The U.S. army showed it can vanquish the mechanized military of any country with which it is likely to enter into conflict, but that it is impotent to stop a ragged band of wild-eyed kill-freaks armed with homemade bombs.

9. American disaster relief organizations had an easier time finding Phuket than they did finding New Orleans.

8. The Bloc Quebecois, which is dedicated to a dream of splitting Canada, had more members of Parliament than the NDP, which is dedicated to a dream of greater social justice.

7. The Toronto Police Services Board was able to get rid of popular former Police Chief Julian Fantino, but have been absent of ideas to get rid of street gangs.

6. The Ontario government decided that pit bull puppies born in Ontario must be killed by injecting them with poison, to prevent them from biting somebody later on. However, gangsters who turn in handguns they keep for the purpose of committing murder will likely be given amnesty and set free to buy new guns.

5. William Jefferson Clinton, whose main claim to fame is that he used the Oval Office of the White House as a setting for receiving oral sex from a woman his daughter's age, is the most popular living U.S. President and now a bestselling author.

4. Conrad Black appealed to the courts to give him back the Canadian citizenship he previously renounced, so that in case he gets convicted Stateside on charges of mega-fraud, he can serve his time in a nice comfy Canadian cottage-jail.

3. Jack Layton and the NDP supported the Liberals for 17 months to twist their arms politically, before helping bring them down on the grounds that they are guilty of corruption and poor performance.

2. George W. Bush encountered greater political problems and negative publicity in America from acts of terrorism he's dedicated to fighting, than the terrorists themselves encountered in their own countries for committing those acts.

And finally, with a great fanfare and drum roll for political junkies in Canada, here is the number one reason why cynicism worked in 2005:

1. The political problems endured by Liberals in the coming election for being associated in the public mind with fraud, theft and kickbacks will be less than the political problems of Conservatives for being associated in the public mind with Western Canada.

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, Joe MacDonald, 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