

Ric Dolphin's

Insight

into Government

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UNITED CONSERVATIVE PARTY

A 'HISTORIC' AGREEMENT, BUT NOT SO FAST...

Negotiators for the Rosers & the PC parties finally produced a blueprint for a merged party that was signed off on by both leaders Thursday. But the signing ceremony wasn't the joyous *pas de deux* some might have expected & unity is looking ever more elusive.

One might have expected streamers and champagne Thursday afternoon when PC leader **Jason Kenney** and his Wildrose counterpart **Brian Jean** finally took to their podiums to announce their merger deal (having kept the room waiting for 20 minutes). But the impression left was not one of overt jubilation—well, certainly not on the Tory side.

Kenney, 48, looked downright miserable: the pudgy face drooped, the rounded shoulders slumped, and those small brown eyes, usually bright as bullets, were brimming with tears—and not the joyful kind.

Jean on the other hand... Well, here's a man whose tear ducts can be activated at the flick of a political switch, and someone who admits to being nervous to the point of nausea when speaking in public, no matter how many hundred times the former MP has performed. And yet on Thursday neither proclivity was present.

A head taller than Kenney, 40 pounds lighter, and tanned from his thrice weekly 7-km runs, the Wildrose leader was chipper—cocky even—and completely at ease. The alpha pooch to Jason's rescue dog.

The disparity of miens seemed odd. Had Kenney just received news of a family tragedy? A break-up text from a boyfriend? A cancer diagnosis?

Our apologies if any of those things apply, but our suspicion is that Brian had laid a beating on Jason—contractually speaking, of course—and that the realization had just sunk in.

As the presser wore on, Kenney slowly reverted to default: the glib, practised politician rhyming off the now familiar talking points—the need to create “a big, diverse, tolerant, common-sense, free-enterprise party” to prevent a second NDP term. The recitation served as liturgical balm, and when it was time to sign the agreement, Kenney even man-

Continued on next page...

POLITICAL PULSE

AMBROSIAL BOOST

OTTAWA'S LOSS IS THE KENNOSAUR'S GAIN

When interim Conservative Party of Canada Leader **Rona Ambrose**, 48, announced on Tuesday that she would be quitting her Sturgeon River-Parkland seat, the timing seemed synchronistic, auspicious even. For Rona's reveal came just two days before the Wildrose and the PCs announced their merger agreement.

Good news, it seemed, for those conservatives who'd been hoping the popular MP, with the mischievous twinkle and the Elvira coif, would stand for the leadership for the United Conservative Party. After all, various unofficial polls, like the phone-in survey conducted by CHED talk radio host **Ryan Jespersen**, had Rona pulling twice the percentages of either **Jason Kenney** or **Brian Jean**.

After all, what better Conservative to take on **Rachel Notley** than an attractive former federal cabinet minister with feminist credentials—as Status of Women Minister she led the campaign to convince the United Nations to create an International Day of the Girl—whose stint as Opposition Leader had earned plaudits from all sides of the House?

But the Ambrosial dreams were dashed on Thursday when *Global News'* Ottawa reporter (and former Alberta Leg. Press Gallery member) **Vassy Kapelos** asked the lady if she were interested.

“A lot of people have approached me and talked to me about it, but no,” said Rona. “If I was to remain in politics I would stay here [Ottawa],” she said.

“How come?” Vassy wondered.

“First and foremost **Jason Kenney** is one of my best and dearest friends and I think he's doing a fantastic job on working to unite the right and I'm a big supporter of that movement... and I hope to help if I can, but I'm not running.”

Bad news for the draft-Rona crowd; good news for the Kennosaur.

Ambrose made her support for Kenney known last July at the annual barbecue put on by her former boss and—as she described him in her farewell speech Tuesday—“political mentor,” **Stephen Harper**.

To the discomfiture of Wildrose Leader **Jean**, who never advanced beyond the position of parliamentary secretary during his time with the Harper gov't, the former PM had thrown his full support behind Kenney, his former cabinet lieutenant, to lead the Progressive Conservatives and unite the right.

Opposition Leader Ambrose followed suit. Both tossed Jean a brief crumb of thanks, as one might thank the little people who toiled tirelessly on one's election campaign. Jean's resistance to Kenney's plan for creating a new party from the ashes of the PCs and the Wil-

Turn to Political Pulse on pg. 5...

aged to unpack a smile for the cameras, declaring this to be a “historic” day.

If Kenney’s initial distress and Jean’s enduring exultation were the result of Wildrose getting the better part of the deal, the inequity wasn’t immediately apparent from the “Agreement in principle on the establishment of the United Conservative Party (UCP)” that the two leaders signed.

In fact the schedule of events laid out in the document seemed largely in accord with the schedule that Kenney has been touting since first announcing his intentions last July. In brief: a ratification of the unification agreement by the members of both “legacy” parties (WR & PC) by July 22; the creation of a “society” to administer the various steps in establishing a new party; the registration of the United Conservative Party (name subject to change by the new membership); the establishment of the new party; the organizing of a founding convention to elect an executive and establish a constitution; the preparations for a leadership convention to be Oct. 28; the organization of constituency associations and candidate nominations.



JEAN

The agreement in principle was the result of seven weeks of closed meetings during which the two, six-member negotiating teams, with legal help from Elections Alberta, produced an eight-page document outlining the schedule and procedures, along with a set of “founding principles” that run the gamut from anodyne, through amorphous, to obvious.

For example, the principle of, “A robust society made up of free individuals, strong families, and voluntary associations.”

Or try: “Environmental responsibility, including the protection and conservation of our natural environment for the benefit of future generations.”

Howzabout: “Universal access to high quality, publicly funded healthcare.”

Kenney has said that he wanted to keep things general, providing a framework on which the membership can later

build policy conferences—and about which potential leadership candidates can debate. (So far Jean and Kenney are the only declared candidates, although Wildrose MLA **Derek Fildebrandt** is considering a run, as are MLA and failed PC leadership contender **Dr. Richard Starke** and former PC cabinet minister **Diana McQueen**).

The Wildrose wanted more specific principles, but the closest they got was the principle of “Grassroots democracy, including measures to empower Albertans to hold gov’ts accountable during and between elections.”

Which refers to the provision of MLA recall—something the Wildrose had unsuccessfully attempted to enact last year through a private member’s bill, but which the PCs have been against.

Outside of recall, there are no principles here with which, say, the Liberals or the Alberta Party would be uncomfortable. And about two thirds of the principles would probably suit the NDP.

Of more pertinence than these vague policy suggestions, however, here are the nuts and bolts of process which speak to the question: will this merger ever happen? And—first supplemental—does **Brian Jean** want it to happen?

You’ll recall that, going into these negotiations, Jean appeared unmoved from his 18-month-old position that the Wildrose party remain intact in all but name and that unity-minded PCers come over to his party, Together they would choose a new name and elect a leader that he fully expected would be him (he has, after all, consistently out-pollled Kenney).

Jean argued that by preserving the Wildrose framework, the party would be able to keep its accumulated wealth—about \$750K— whereas under Kenney’s plan, which proposed creating a brand new party, the accumulated funds would be forfeited or frozen (depending on whether the old party was dissolved or simply became dormant). Jean

Continued on next page...

Verbatim ...

EMERGENCY CASH CALL

Sarah Hoffman, deputy premier, Health Minister, and the NDP’s chief political pitbull, has through the spring session been goading the conservative “dance partners” and mocking their unity talks “in the back rooms of the Federal building” (actually a hotel north of the Leg.) A few hours after the Rosers and Tories signed their unity deal Thursday, however, Hoffman had dispatched the following email to party members that sounded more worried than jocular:

“Following months of infighting and navel-gazing, the PCs and Wildrose have put forward a plan to merge—and their sole purpose is to defeat us.

I’ll be blunt: a “united right” *is* a threat to the progress we’ve made together. We know you’re ready to stand up to this threat and we’re getting ready to stand with you.

Over the last two years, we’ve brought in changes that make life better for Albertans like you. Changes like increasing the

minimum wage, freezing tuition fees and cancelling the PC’s health and education cuts. It’s a track record that we’re proud of and will be tough for anyone to beat.

Today’s news is a clear reminder that with an election less than 24 months away, we can’t waste a single moment.

Jason Kenney and Brian Jean aren’t doing this because it’s in the best interest of Albertans—they’re doing it for their own political gain.

Last week, Kenney told a reporter: “If we unite free-enterprise voters, they’re done. Stick a fork in it.” He even called us a “one-term government.”

I don’t think anyone should tell Albertans they don’t stand a chance or that their vote doesn’t count. It didn’t work out for them last time when they thought they couldn’t lose—and then they lost.”

This time, they think Albertans owe them something—but they’re wrong.

Show you’re with us. Chip in \$50 or more today:

<https://secure.albertandp.ca/page/contribute/unitedright>

Thanks, **Sarah Hoffman**

MLA, Edmonton-Glenora, Alberta’s NDP ”

also spouted some guff about preserving the Wildrose's magnificent grassroots-oriented constitution.

It all sounded a bit dubious. A more credible explanation for Jean's obduracy is that it is a grudge match. It started when **Jason Kenney** blew into town last summer and, backed by **Stephen Harper** and **Rona Ambrose** (with **Preston Manning** working behind the scenes), became the designated lead in the unite-the -right movement (also see pp. 1,5).

Put yourself in Brian Jean's shoes: not only did you pull the Wildrose Party back from the brink following **Jim Prentice**'s floor-crossing debacle, but you almost doubled the party's representation in the House from its pre-Prentice level and replenished the coffers. Both you and the party consistently top the polls outside of Edmonton. How would you feel about having Kenney positioned in front of you by the federal Conservative establishment? You'd probably not be altogether cool with it.

Unfortunately, more than half your caucus and half your members have been seduced by the articulate and politically well-pedigreed Mr. Kenney, whose message—conservative unity or else—strikes a chord. And so, unless you want a mutiny, you agree to participate in the unity negotiations, all the while looking for a means of... well, sabotage is such a harsh word, so let's call it a means of *egress*.

Which brings us to the nuts and bolts of the agreement and, in particular, the requirements for ratification, without which unity dies on July 22 (which, BTW, was the date in 1706 when the union between England and Scotland was agreed upon).

During the town halls that Brian has been hosting almost every week since the start of the year, he has made much of the fact that the Wildrose would require a majority vote of 75% plus one for approval. His argument is that a simple 50%+1 majority—which is the PCs' requirement—would create polarization in the ranks, pit brother against brother, etc.

And indeed the 75%+ is written into the agreement as the threshold for Rosers who will be voting for ratification at a special meeting sometime before July 22 (details yet to be worked out), as is the 50%+ for Tories.

From what we've been hearing anecdotally from Rosers, the level of support for the unity deal is a little more 60%. And on Friday, the day after the tentative deal was signed, Jean—surprise, surprise—was sounding a tad tentative about hitting 75%.

"I'm not confident of that," he told the *Calgary Herald*. "...Some people are not prepared to forgive and forget. Also a lot of people believe we can go it alone and win."

Not very long ago Jean was publicly saying the same thing—at least the bit about going it alone and winning. He probably still thinks that, but needs to satisfy a restive membership that he gave unity his best shot.

As for Kenney, we suspect that he came to the realization on Thursday that this unity business will be a lot tougher than he could have imagined.

NEB IN CALGARY'S POCKET?

NOTLEY ON PANEL'S PLAN TO MOVE BOARD: A 'DUMB' IDEA

The de-greening of **Rachel Notley** took another step forward this past week following the release of an expert panel's report calling for the replacement of the Calgary-based National Energy Board (NEB) with an Ottawa-based "Canadian Energy Transmission Commission."

Asked what she thought of the idea at a presser on Tuesday, the Premier, who, increasingly, seems to be channelling **Peter Lougheed** during his anti-NEP period, said, "You know, I think if someone proposed moving the Atlantic Opportunities Marketing Agency from Atlantic Canada to Winnipeg, people would say 'that's dumb.' And let me just say that moving the NEB to eastern Canada is dumb. We are absolutely opposed to that."

Notley was similarly dismissive of the panel's charge that the NEB's Calgary base "sets the state for undue influence by industry and that erodes its independence."

"We don't see any evidence that the organization is biased, certainly not on the basis of its geography. The idea that its geography is somehow negating the ability of the organization to conduct itself in an evidence and science based way is silliness... if that argument were to be accepted then its application to about 90% of other things that the federal gov't does would lead to some pretty strange results."

We'll ignore the fact that it's actually called the "Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency," and that its function does not entail arbitrating trans-provincial energy projects, but rather the handing out of cash to regional enterprises. (And, incidentally, the ACOA's allotment for 2017-18 is \$335M whilst our region's equivalent, Western Economic Diversification, must manage on \$181M.)

The NEB, whose board is chaired by Alberta's former top civil servant **Peter Watson**, has, since the Harper era, come under increasing criticism from environmentalists and native groups who have accused the agency of being in the pockets of Big Oil and not nearly attentive enough to the protestations of the anti-pipeline folk.

The appellants won their case against the NEB-approved Northern Gateway pipeline in the Federal Appeal Court on the grounds of insufficient consultation with the coastal tribes (the 18 months of NEB hearings that had heard the same arguments over and over again did not count.)

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** added a period of extra consultation with the Aboriginals, post NEB approval, but that hasn't stopped a dozen native groups (whose legal fees are paid by the taxpayer), along with a couple of environmental groups, from appealing the Trans Mountain pipe in Federal Court.

Last week, Notley announced that Alberta had been granted intervenor status in the case that will be heard in Vancouver in the fall.

The lead applicant is the Tsleil-Waututh (pr: slay-wah-tuth) Nation (formerly called the Burrard Inlet band), claim-

ing a lack of “deep consultation” on the part of Energy Minister **Jim Carr**.

The Tsleil-Waututh’s 250 residents lived on a small urban reserve in North Vancouver, right across Burrard Inlet from Trans Mountain’s Westridge Marine Terminal, until the band’s development company built 800 high-end homes and condos, and used part of the proceeds to buy 800 acres further up the inlet for a replacement reserve.

In a 35-page application to the federal court, the band’s three lawyers argue that although Carr met with the chief and other band members, he failed to address such concerns

as “the cultural significance of killer whales as messengers and that there would be significant impacts on [the band’s] culture if the killer whales were impacted by marine shipping.”

While the federal case is expected to be dispensed with fairly peaceably. The threat of violent clashes on the ground in Burnaby looms large. At an oil and gas conference in Edmonton on Friday, **Bruce Robertson**, Chairman of the Explorers and Producers Association of Canada, said, “When the shovels hit the ground, my belief is there’s going to be an uprising in Burnaby...And it’s going to be ugly..”

POLITICAL PULSE ... from Page 1

drose, likely grew out of his resentment for the humiliation he was served at that barbecue.

At the PC leadership convention in March, many Tory members were expecting Harper to nominate the front-runner. But—apropos of Kenney’s insistence that he intended to create a tolerant, inclusive, “big tent” party a-la-Lougheed— it was Ambrose, the centrist media sweetheart, who popped up on stage to do the honours. And she delivered a ringing encomium.

“I had the pleasure of working with Jason for over a decade during our time in Ottawa,” she told the enthusiastic crowd. “And I watched him as he successfully handled some of the most difficult issues in our country with compassion, with sincerity, and with integrity. Jason is one of the hardest working people I know. And when he told me he was leaving Ottawa to come home to Alberta to seek the leadership of the party and to promote the unity of conservatives I knew that he had his heart in the right place.”

Rona will step down as interim leader following the election of a permanent chief on May 27 and she’ll end her 13-year-run as MP when Parliament breaks for the summer in late June.

Her announcement on Tuesday brought high praise from every quarter—and a big hug from Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**—a demonstration of her popularity that reignited the disappointment that many in caucus felt when, by taking the interim role, she disqualified herself from running for the top job. A movement to change the constitution to allow her to qualify sprung up briefly, but ended when she and to spend more time with her common-law husband **J.P. Veitch**, a Calgary stockbroker and former bull rider, and her three pre-teen stepchildren.

As interim leader, Ambrose, whose stints in six cabinet posts under Harper were largely undistinguished, had found her métier. Without the pressure of permanence or the worry of reelection, she could relax and be herself. And while earning a reputation as both a hard worker in the field—CPC fundraising outpaces the Liberals’ and membership continues to grow— and an aggressive debater in the House, Ambrose has brought a light touch and a grace to her role, along with a sense of humour.

More than anything else, Rona will be remembered for her humor - be it April Fool’s pranks, such as listing Stornoway on Airbnb, or the jokes at the expense of **her husband** or **her old boss** at the Parliamentary Press Gallery dinner. “I really believe in my heart that the former prime minister was misunderstood,” she said. “Stephen Harper loved humanity, it was just people that he couldn’t stand.”

Having listened to all the praise heaped on her in Parliament on Tuesday, she said, “I am overwhelmed by the kind comments and good wishes from my colleagues. However, for members who are new in the House, if you are wondering how long it takes, or how long they have to be here until people say nice things about you, you actually do not have to wait; you just have to quit.”

DOSSIER:

RONALEE “RONA” CHAPCHUK AMBROSE

	Born	Mar. 15, 1969, Valleyview, AB (age 48)
	Parents	Colleen & James Chapchuk (oil co. exec.)
	Education	BA Women’s studies (UVic), MA political science (UofA)
Languages	English, Spanish, Portuguese, some French	
Husband	Bruce Ambrose (1994-2011)	
Common law husband	James Patrick (J.P.) Veitch , 50, former bull rider currently working as an institutional investment dealer in the energy field.	
Children	None; Veitch has three pre-teen children	
Job pre-politics	Policy analyst, Alberta Gov’t	
Political affiliation	Conservative Party of Canada	
Personal politics	Libertarian and fan of Ayn Rand ; feminist with ties to organizations fighting violence against women, but also pro-life.	
Elected	’04, ’06, ’08, ’11 Edmonton-Spruce Grove; 2015 Sturgeon River-Parkland	
Cabinet posts	Environment (’06-’07), Intergovernmental Affairs (’07-’08), Labour (’08-’10), Public Works, Status of Women (’10-’13), Health (’13-’15)	
Official Opposition Leader	Nov. 2015—May 2017	
Salary	\$247.5K p.a. (plus the official residence, Stornoway, & a chauffeured car).	

After leaving Ottawa, Ambrose will spend a few months as a visiting scholar at the Canada Institute of the Wilson Centre in Washington D.C. The centre’s alumni include an array of outgoing Canadian politicians, including the late former premier **Jim Prentice** and former Manitoba Premier and former Canadian ambassador to the US **Gary Doer**, who was recently hired by the Alberta gov’t as a special trade envoy in Washington (Insight May 12). She is also planning to write a kids’ book on her role in the establishment of the International Day of the Girl.

One trusts, however, that she’ll be back in Alberta in the fall to help her friend **Jason Kenney** win the leadership of the United Conservative Party on Oct. 28. Assuming, of course, that nothing happens to derail the process in the meantime.

BILLS RECENTLY INTRODUCED & PASSED

(For more detail go to: <http://www.assembly.ab.ca/net/index.aspx?p=bill§ion=doc&legl=29&session=3>)

BILL #	TITLE (Sponsor)/Status	P U R P O S E	R E A C T I O N
NEW BILLS			
13	Securities Amendment Act, 2017 (Ceci)/Committee of the Whole	This bill gives self-regulatory organizations like the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada (IIROC) the same statutory powers as the Alberta Securities Commission in investigating and adjudicating complaints against investment dealers. For example, these organizations would now be able to compel attendance and the production of evidence during their investigations, and their employees would be immune from civil liability. Ceci sold the bill as something that would provide greater protection for investors from unscrupulous dealers and enhance the integrity of the Alberta securities market.	Approval from both sides of the House and an excuse for a number of NDP members to drag things out by pontificating at length on the importance of investing and being able to trust one's financial advisor.
14	An Act to Support Orphan Well Rehabilitation (McCuaig-Boyd)/Passed 2nd reading	This bill authorizes the gov't to lend up to \$235M to the Orphan Well Association (OWA), an agency run by the Alberta Energy Regulator, for the clean up of wells that have been abandoned by companies that have been bankrupted or did not have the money for proper closure procedures. The principal amount, which will pay for the reclamation of about 700 wellsites over the next three years (a third of those in the OWA's orphan well inventory), will be paid back by petroleum producers through the AER over 10 years, with a \$30M grant from the federal gov't paying the interest. Energy Minister Marg McCuaig-Boyd claims the clean up will create 1,650 jobs for oilfield service workers.	Although this addresses a problem of greatest concern in rural ridings where the Wildrose is strong, some concern was expressed by the PCs that the gov't might be able to exercise political control over which wells should be cleaned up (i.e. in the dozen or so rural & semi-rural ridings with NDP MLAs) when the OWA is better equipped to determine the priority wells. NDP members insisted this would not be the case. There was unanimous support for 2nd reading.
15	Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2017 (Ceci)/Passed 2nd reading.	This annual update of tax legislation includes house-keeping amendments to align Alberta's tax law with federal legislation. But it also contains an adjustment that would prevent the "claw-back" of carbon levies from the recently deceased - as happened, somewhat embarrassingly, in March when the Canada Revenue Agency (which administers the carbon tax on behalf of the province) sent out demand notices to grieving relatives. Those who returned the rebate will be repaid and henceforth the rebates will no longer be paid as a (minimum) \$100 advance at the beginning of the benefit year, but in quarterly installments over the 12 months. The bill also extends the political contribution tax credits to leadership campaigns and nomination races (max: \$4k p.a.) to reflect changes announced in the budget.	The carbon tax adjustment provided opposition members with an opportunity to chide the gov't on its insensitivity in sending out the claw-back letters in the first place. But concern was also expressed over the changes that will require four times as many rebate mailings and could perhaps increase the administrative costs beyond what it would cost to merely allow the families of deceased recipients to keep the \$100. The opposition supported the bill on 2nd reading but Wildrose said it would need to know the administrative costs before supporting it in the further stages of debate.
206	Child, Youth and Family Enhancement (Adoption Advertising) Amendment Act, 2017 , (Aheer)/passed 1st reading	Wildrose MLA Leela Aheer (Chestermere-Rocky View) is sponsoring this bill on the inspiration of colleague Nathan Cooper (Olds-Didsbury) who has two adopted children. It would allow the publication of an on-line advertisement by a licensed adoption agency publicizing the profiles of prospective adoptive parents as is already allowed in other provinces. No debate yet.	
BILLS PASSED			
8	An Act to Strengthen Municipal Government (Anderson)/Awaits Royal Assent	An adjunct to the massive <i>Modernized Municipal Government Act</i> , which was passed in December (<i>Insight</i> Dec. 16), Bill 8 continues the tweaking process which, according to Muni Affairs Minister Shaye Anderson, is the result of all the input the ministry is getting from municipalities, industry, the general public, et al along the way and will help fine tune the MMGA before its passage sometime prior to the fall municipal elections. This being said, Bill 8, despite its 44 items, does little more than provide clarification of what is already in the main act or offer up suggestions of things councils might do. For example, as part of the NDP's attempts to get more women involved in gov't, the bill will "enable municipalities to create a councillor parental leave bylaw." It's hard to imagine a municipality that would tolerate an elected councillor taking one of her four years off to tend to the wee bairn. Perhaps the Dippers are testing the waters in preparation for an MLA parental leave policy.	Continuing concern expressed by the opposition about the costs to municipalities, especially the small ones, of setting up joint-use plans between municipalities and school boards to combine facilities and resources without additional provincial funding.
12	New Home Buyer Protection Amendment Act, 2017 (S. Anderson)/Awaits Royal Assent	Currently there are no specific requirements to be a residential builder in Alberta. This bill establishes a licensing system requiring builders to demonstrate proficiency and financial viability. And it provides home buyers with a single on-line source of information on builders, and creates provisions to remove or suspend negligent or unscrupulous businesses.	Assured that existing Municipal Affairs staff would be used for administering the system, the opposition was generally supportive of this bill.

Insight

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The week ahead ...

May 23—Happy birthday Health Minister and Deputy Premier **Sarah Hoffman**, born 37 years ago in Edmonton.

May 24—The 176K absentee ballots are to have been counted and we'll find out if BC's election night standings change. On May 10, the Liberals had a minority of 43 of the 87 seats in the BC Legislature, the NDP 41, and the Green Party held the balance of power with three seats. The expectation is that the Liberals will pick up an extra seat in Comox-Courtenay, where the NDP margin of victory was nine votes, but many of the absentee voters are members of CFB Comox and are likely to have voted for Liberal candidate and former base commander **Jim Benninger**.

May 26-27—The Conservative Party of Canada's leadership convention at the Toronto Congress Centre, with the ballot-by-ballot results being announced starting at 5 pm eastern time. Given the convoluted preferential balloting system, its difficult to predict which of the 13 candidates will win, although, with **Kevin O'Leary** having dropped out (*Insight* Apr. 28), urging his supporters to back **Maxime Bernier**, the latter is thought to have the edge. Although most ballots will have been mailed to Ottawa, there are a number of actual polling stations scattered around the country. The single Alberta polling station, for members of 17 north/central ridings, will be run out of the Chateau Nova Yellowhead, 13920 Yellowhead Trail, Edmonton, between 9 am and 2 pm.

May 27—On-line voting begins in the Liberal leadership contest with Calgary lawyers **Kerry Cundal** and **David Khan** in the running. Not much to choose between the two, policy-wise, and the winner will likely be whoever sold the majority of the roughly 1,000 memberships purchased between the close of nominations at the end of March and the May 15 sales cut-off. (bringing the total membership to around 1,800). Voting goes until June 3, with the winner to be announced at the party's AGM on June 4 in Calgary. For more info and to register for the AGM go to: http://www.albertaliberal.com/take_action

May 27—Education Minister **Dave Eggen** and his Edmonton-Calder constituency members will be holding a \$150-a-plate fundraiser billed as "an exciting night of traditional Thai food and entertainment" (Dave's wife is Thai) at the Kensington Community League, 12130 134A Ave. For tickets: <http://www.albertandp.ca/tasteofthailand2017>

People ...

Appointments...

● **Delaine Coleman**, journeyman electrician and volunteer mentor of girls in the trades for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local 424) in Fort Saskatchewan, **Gursewak Mann**, a construction coordinator at Sherritt International, and **Mike Yorke**, a manager of labour

relations with the North West Redwater Partnership (Sturgeon Refinery), as members of the Alberta Apprenticeship & Industry Training Board, each for a three-year term.

● **Jo-Ann Hall**, a UofA professor emeritus in the sociology of sport, **Dianne Harder** a Stony Plain teacher, and **Jenelle Saskiw**, former mayor of the village of Marwayne & now a lobbyist with Alberta Counsel, a legal & lobbyist firm partly owned by former Wildrose MLA and lawyer **Shayne Saskiw**, as members of The Board of Governors of Lakeland College, each for a three-year term.