

Ric Dolphin's

Insight into Government

Alberta's independent newsletter on government & politics

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Volume 32 Number 7

Week ending Oct. 28, 2017

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UCP LEADERSHIP WIN

A KENNOSAUR ROMP PRIMES THE NDP FOR CULTURE WAR

As virtually everyone outside the Jean camp was predicting, Jason Kenney has been elected leader of the United Conservative Party on the first ballot. Already the battle lines are being drawn with the NDP strategy being an attack on social issues.

Jason Kenney, rotund and orotund, steamrolled to victory Saturday evening in front of almost two thousand conservatives at Calgary's BMO Centre. And at least two-thirds of them were ecstatic, mobbing Kenney as he made his way to and from the stage in a scene reminiscent of **Justin Trudeau's** appearances during the 2015 campaign.

"Well," said Kenney, beginning his victory speech, "It's another miracle on the prairies." He was referencing the line uttered by a victorious **Ralph Klein** in 1993 at the end of a campaign in which the Liberals had been running neck-and-neck. And although he got a huge cheer for the line, Kenney's winning of the United Conservative Party leadership was more inevitability than miracle.

Kenney, 49, a former federal cabinet minister and **Stephen Harper** lieutenant, first announced his intentions to seek the Progressive Conservative leadership and then unite the PCs and the Wildrose at a Stampede barbecue in July of 2016. With a ground campaign run by a crack team of experienced federal operatives deploying a small army of volunteers, many of them Christian youth from Catholic and evangelical congregations; with plenty of money from the conservative segments of corporate Calgary and Edmonton; and with an air campaign in which a simple, compelling message (conservatives united can defeat the NDP) was delivered eloquently and without notes, Kenney followed through on his promises. He won the PC leadership with 75% of the vote on Mar. 18 and effected a unity vote on July 22 in which 95% of both Wildrosers and Progressive Conservatives voted in favour of merging their memberships and creating the UCP. Kenney's win as leader of the party he essentially brought into being was a virtual certainty.

In the online voting, Kenney got 35,623, or 61.1% of the 58,232 votes (59% of membership), to former Wildrose Leader **Brian Jean's** 18,336 (31.5%), and Calgary lawyer **Doug Schweitzer's**

Continued on next page...

POLITICAL PULSE

VERBATIM

JASON KENNEY'S VICTORY SPEECH TO THE UCP

"Well, it's another miracle on the Prairies. (huge cheer) United, tonight we send a message to all of those Albertans who are struggling, to the 200,000 who are unemployed. To the tens of thousands who have given up looking for work or who have left our province. To the thousands of struggling entrepreneurs and small business people who are barely hanging on, we say to them and so many others, tonight we say to them that hope is on the horizon and common sense is comin' back (huge cheer).

Tonight we are one step closer to renewing the Alberta Advantage and getting the province back on track. We are one step closer, to reigniting our economy so that, once again, Alberta is that land of opportunity. We are one step closer to a gov't focused on prosperity so that we have the means to be a compassionate and generous society. We are one step closer to a gov't that will stop mortgaging our future with debt so we can improve health care and education instead of enriching bankers and bondholders with interest payments. (applause)

And, friends, we are one step closer to a gov't that will stand up and defend our province from the growing attacks against our resources and our economy. (big cheer)

In other words, friends, we are one step closer to a gov't based on common sense and the mainstream values of ordinary Albertans instead of the failed and divisive ideology of the NDP.

Friends, when we launched the campaign to unite Alberta 16 long months ago... the cynics and the critics said it couldn't be done. But they didn't understand that Alberta is the 'can-do' province. This is the province of fresh starts and new beginnings. This is the province where all through our history we have overcome adversity through hard work just as we have done over the past 16 months. Because, friends, we have united. We have chosen a leader. And now, if we work hard, stay humble, and earn every vote, we will ensure that this deceptive, divisive, debt-quadrupling, tax-hiking, job-killing, accidental socialist gov't, is won and done. (huge cheering)...

As I've said from day one, this was never about uniting the right because most people don't situate themselves in some theoretical political spectrum.

This has always been about uniting Albertans who understand the traditional values that have animated this province since its beginning. Those who understand that in order to be a compassionate and generous society you must be a prosperous one first; those who understand that you can't redistribute wealth unless some people are creating that wealth through their hard work in the first place (big cheer); people who understand that you can't tax and borrow your way to prosperity; people who understand the creative power of a free economy... "

4,273 (7.3%). This decisive, first-ballot win, had been predicted by virtually everyone to whom we had spoken, including senior people in the NDP. Those in the Jean camp, of course, begged to differ. At the end of the week, a senior Jean campaigner was still forecasting a “very close” vote that “could go either way.”

Thus when Kenney had Jean and Schweitzer come to the stage, calling them “two great Albertans without whom we would not have this unity movement,” Schweitzer was gracious (he later said he plans to run for a UCP seat in 2019). Jean, however, could barely bring himself to shake Kenney’s hand. And following the latter’s kind remarks about Schweitzer (“a fresh young voice that represents in so many ways the future of Alberta”), Jean began leaving the stage, only to be called back by Kenney who said, “Hang on, Brian, I want to say something nice about you.” And proceeded:

“All of us... owe a debt of gratitude to this gentleman, who at a time of great personal adversity, and political adversity, stepped up when others wouldn’t, to continue to be a principled voice for free-enterprise values in the Alberta Legislature, who’s crossed every corner of this province for the last two and a half years, with passion, with integrity, with the support of his family and an amazing team, Brian Jean has been a true champion of ordinary Albertans, of grass-roots democracy, of conservative values, and we can never thank him enough...”

Jean bore the praise stoically, then left the stage and the hall. At press time, he had studiously avoided talking to the media, although he (or one of his election people) thanked his supporters and wished Kenney well on Facebook. “Our party is united, it’s strong, and together, we will bring prosperity back to Alberta,” read the post.

Kenney and Jean, who served together in the federal CPC caucus—the former as a cabinet minister, the latter as the lowlier role of parliamentary secretary—have never liked each another. And during the leadership campaign Kenney periodically sniped at Jean over his resistance to unity.

On Saturday, however, Kenney said he hoped that both Schweitzer and Jean would remain involved with the UCP. One assumes Kenney is sincere in this desire. Jean was supported by 11 of the 22 former Wildrose MLAs, as well as about a third of the UCP membership. Marginalizing him could exacerbate an already prickly situation, possibly even causing some of the redder Rosers (Chestermere-Rocky View’s **Leela Aheer** comes to mind) to go independent or join the Alberta Party (as the recently defected NDP MLA **Karen McPherson** did on the weekend).

However, one wonders whether Jean, whose professed humility has always rung a little hollow, could accept being subservient to anyone in the party, let alone Kenney.

At a press conference on Sunday, Kenney said he would be talking to Jean in the next few days. Perhaps he’ll be accepting his resignation as MLA for Fort McMurray-Conklin.

That would mean a second byelection. The first will occur in Calgary-Lougheed, the riding that has been held since 2004 by former PCer **Dave Rodney**, the second longest serving MLA after NDPer **Brian Mason**. Rodney, 53, joined Kenney at the Sunday presser to announce he was vacating the seat to allow his “good friend” (and fellow Catholic) Jason to run in what seems a safe conservative seat (it has roughly the same boundaries as one of the two wards where conservative mayoral candidate **Bill Smith** got more votes than **Naheed Nenshi** [*Insight* Oct. 21])

Rodney steps down on Wednesday, but we wouldn’t be

surprised to see him return in 2019 to run in another Calgary riding and—if he wins and Kenney forms gov’t—be rewarded for his sacrifice with the full cabinet position that has so far eluded him. (He briefly held the junior portfolio of “Associate Minister of Wellness” under **Alison Redford**.)

Kenney urged Premier **Rachel Notley** to follow “Westminster tradition” in calling a byelection for the leader of the opposition party without delay. By law, the premier has up to six months, but we can’t imagine her denying Kenney his wish.

The NDP wants at Kenney, and one can bet that it will be in the fields of the culture wars where they will be concentrating their attacks. And, in particular, LGBT rights, an area where the Dippers have already been poking at Kenney—initially in regard to his statement in the spring that parents should be informed when their kids join gay-straight alliances. This so-called “outing” of homosexual students is being targeted by a piece of legislation that the NDP will introduce in the fall session that makes it illegal for school staff to inform parents that their children are gay.

Another area where culture-war volleys have already been fired is school curriculum. The NDP are currently working on a major rewrite, not only transforming social studies into what sounds like an abrogation of white, male achievement, in favour of feminist advocacy and Aboriginal grievance, but also “modernizing” sex-ed instruction. This means the inclusion of homosexual practice, along with information on birth control, and an exploration of the ever-expanding bestiary of transgenderism which regularly adds new letters to the original LGBT initials. (In a recent news release, Liberal leader **David Khan**, who’s gay, lamented Alberta’s woeful lagging behind other provinces on “LGBTQ2S+-inclusive health care.” Phew.)

All of this stuff being anathemic to Catholic teaching, the separate school districts have been working on their own parallel “human sexuality” curriculum, which adheres to Vatican teaching, and proscribes condoms, homosexual sex, sex outside of marriage, masturbation, oral and anal sex, and the idea that one’s gender can differentiate from the fact of one’s physiognomy.

Education Minister **David Eggen** and Premier Notley were both quick to condemn the Catholics, saying that the parallel curriculum is non-starter and could never be considered. Notley also pointed out that parents will continue to have the right to withdraw their children from objectionable sex-ed classes.

Kenney the devout Catholic, meanwhile, defended the separate school boards’ right to dictate how sex-ed is taught in their schools. “It’s not for me or the premier to dictate to the Catholic education system how it teaches Catholic values,” he told reporters last Tuesday. He said the Catholic school system “has a constitutional right to be Catholic and I would ask our premier to respect the Constitution and those rights.”

As the NDP gov’t is clearly not about to allow the publicly funded separate system to adopt its own sex-ed curriculum, it is possible that we are on the verge of a showdown that could result in the gov’t amending the Alberta’s founding Constitution—foisted upon us by the **Wilfred Laurier** gov’t to appease Québec’s Catholic bishops— which entrenches the parallel Catholic system.

Is this the kind of fight in which Kenney wants to become embroiled leading up to the next election? Likely not, but it’s a fight that the NDP is only too happy to promulgate, knowing that it can only help their campaign to

DATA Bank ...

CONTRIBUTIONS* TO PARTIES & TO THIRD-PARTY ADVERTISERS

With the *Fair Elections Financing Act* preventing anyone from making more than \$4K in total political contributions in a given year, and legislation enacted in 2015 that prohibits corporate or union donations to politicians or political parties, party income has declined to roughly half of what it used to be. Complicating matters this year, has been the creation of the United Conservative Party by the members of the Wildrose and the PCs. While those latter parties continue to exist as entities, they only continued to collect donations up until the unity vote on July 22. With the limits put on political donations, the entities known as third-party advertisers (sometimes also called PACs, like the political action committees in the US) have become a means through which large donors, corporations, and unions can contribute. There are no limits on the amounts, and the money can be used for advertising an issue (not a party or a politician) or for helping with certain expenses, such as paying an leader a salary before he has been elected, or paying a salary to a politician who has stepped down to make way for a new leader.

PARTY:	NDP	UPC (Est. July 24)	WILD-ROSE	PC	LIBS	ALBERTA PARTY	GREENS
Donations (Q3)	\$429.9K	\$397.6K	\$121.2K	\$23.8K	\$49.8K	\$28.2K	\$1.6K
Donations (Q1-Q3)	\$1.35M	\$396.6K	\$972.6K	\$337.6K	\$131.6K	\$80.4K	\$9.8K
Donations <\$250 Q1-Q3	\$477.2K	\$259.4K	\$553.5K	\$144.4K	\$14.7K	\$28.2K	\$2.5K
Donations >\$250 Q1-Q3	\$873.2K	\$138.1K	\$419.1K	\$193.2K	\$35.1K	\$52.2K	\$7.3K
Donations 2016 (Q3)	\$425.44K	N/A	\$511.7K	\$55.9K	\$46.7K	\$16.4K	\$2.2K
Donations 2016 (Q1-Q3)	\$788.66K	N/A	\$1.25M	\$268.8K	\$133.5K	\$52.9K	\$23.3K
Top party contributors Q1-Q3 '17	Timothy Chu, \$4K; Thomas Dang (MLA), \$4K; Kathleen Feehand, \$4K; Allan Kettles, \$4K; Doug O'Halloran, \$3.8K; Don Smith, \$4K; Anne McGrath, \$3.8K	Gudrun Ebbinghoff, \$4K; Gordon Elliott, \$4K; Geoff Green, \$4K; Robert Such, \$4K; Marg Southern, \$3.5K; David Werkland, \$3K; Donna Sontag, \$2.5K; Edward Sontag, \$2.5K	Gordon Arnell, \$4.9K; Cheryl Wilei, \$4.5K; Paul Doucette, \$4.1K; Gary Kalyncuk, \$4.1K; Harvey Aarbo, \$4K; Gordon Elliott, \$4K; Arlene Goodchild, \$4K; Sterling Goodchild, \$4K; Tasker Goodchild, \$4K	Maria Binnion, \$4K; Peter Johnson, \$4K; Stan Milner, \$4K; John Neudorf, \$4K; Constance Nolin, \$4K; Dennis Nolin, \$4K; Heather Shaw, \$4K; Prem Singmar, \$4K.	Ebrahim Karbani, \$4K; Zulkurnain, \$3.5K; Dan MacLennan, \$3.35K; Tariq Husain, \$3.3K; Israr Ullah, \$3.3K; Fazal Rehman, \$3K; Saifuddin Syed, \$3K	Sharon Siebens, \$4K; Rhondda Siebens, \$4K; Troy Wason, \$1.9K; Patrick Bailie, \$1.5K; Paul Doherty, \$1.5K; Dale Huntingford, \$1.5K	Richard Willott, \$1.9K; David Crowe, \$1.1K; Peter Labastide, \$1K; Jerome Backmeyer, \$500; Alan Ernst, \$500.

*Alberta's annual limit on all political donations is \$4K per annum, but people can circumvent this rule by having family members, employees, or union comrades make donations on their behalf.

THIRD PARTY POLITICAL ADVERTISER CONTRIBUTIONS

FUND	ALBERTA ADVANTAGE	ALBERTA FEDERATION OF LABOUR	ALBERTA VICTORY FUND	BALANCED ALBERTA FUND
AFFILIATION	Jason Kenney	NDP	Jason Kenney	Doug Schweitzer
Donations Q1-Q3	\$813.5K	\$503K	\$23K	\$51.5K
MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS	Stan Milner, \$50K; NTL Pipelines, \$50K, PCL Constructors, \$50K; Mike Rose, \$50K; Vivek Chiba Prof. Corp., \$50K; Active Warehousing Inc., \$30K; Brad Shaw, \$30K	United Nurses of Alberta, \$132.3K; Health Sciences Assoc. Alta, \$111.1K; UFCW Local 401, \$79.4K; CUPE Local 401, \$23.6K; ATU Local 583, \$14.3K; UFCW Local 1187U, \$11.95K	Brian Felesky, \$2K; Hanh Nguyen, \$1.2K; Serge Allard, \$1K; Gary Bikman, \$1K; Brad Clarke, \$1K; Craig Corser, \$1K; Donald Morrison, \$1K; Bryan Perkins, \$1K; Glen Solomon, \$1K	Birchcliff Energy, \$35K; Stream Systems Ltd., \$5K; AMH Casa Investments Ltd., \$3K; Cadre Staffing, Inc., \$3K; Wilde & Company, \$2.5K; Meteor Developments Ltd., \$2K; Cavell Holdings Inc., \$1K
FUND	INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL 424	MERIT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION	THE ALBERTA FUND	UNITED LIBERTY
AFFILIATION	NDP	None	Brian Jean	Derek Fildebrandt
Donations Q1-Q3	\$2K	\$193K	\$32.4K	\$12K
MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS	Scott Crichton, \$2K	Merit Contractors Association, \$193K	1175609 Alberta Ltd., \$15K; Wapiti Properties Inc., \$10K; Wiif Brooks, \$4.4K; Clarence Shields, \$3K	Harris Lust, \$5K; Strathmore Motor Products, \$5K; Zoltan Padar, \$1K; Bill Cawston, \$500; Dale Cockx, \$500

AMAZONIAN CRUMBS

THE SYMBOLIC IMPORT OF A WAREHOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

Amazon, to whom virtually every city in the US and Canada (including Edmonton & Calgary) is offering up its first born and the keys to its treasure houses to attract the corporation's second North American HQ, threw a few crumbs Alberta's way this week.

The world's fourth largest public corporation (by market capitalization) announced that it will build a 600K-sq-ft fulfillment centre (distribution warehouse) in Balzac, 25 km north of Calgary. When completed in 2019, it will employ 750 workers. Most of these jobs will be of the menial kind generally more exciting to a permanently depressed Maritime province (where the arrival of a call centre warrants a fiesta). And given Amazon's avid avoidance of unions at its North American warehouses, this particular job creation initiative is unlikely to please the NDP's pals with the Alberta Federation of Labour.

However, a big part of the gov't's strategy heading towards the 2019 election, is to create the perception that it is diversifying the economy and creating plenty of jobs to replace the 150K or more than have been lost to the oil bust. And 750 is a nice number, especially in Calgary, where the suffering is greatest, and where the NDP is focusing its beneficence in the hope of burnishing its popularity.

Thus it was that Premier **Rachel Notley**, newbie Infrastructure Minister (and Calgary ambassador) **Sandra Jansen**, and the single remaining Calgary Liberal MP, **Kent Hehr**, Minister of Sport & Persons with Disabilities, were in Balzac Thursday morning posing with the excavating machines at a staged ground-breaking, and taking credit for creating these jobs.

(Absent was Calgary-Skyview MP **Darshan Kang**, who quit the Liberal caucus in September, having been accused of *Weinsteining* several female assistants [*Insight*, Sept. 20]. He's reportedly taking time off to clear his name. Might take a while.)

Amazon's decision to place its sixth Canadian warehouse in the Calgary area—there are three in the Greater Toronto Area, and two in suburban Vancouver—was proof, said Notley, that Alberta's lower taxes (i.e. no sales or payroll taxes), and lack of health care premiums, made the province “the best place in Canada to invest and do business.”

The facility was, she added, “one of several important expansions international businesses have made in Alberta this year.” Included on her list were:

- RocketSpace, a San Francisco-based tech venvap, the only company that came to Calgary as a result of a June trade mission to California led by Economic Development Minister **Deron Bilous**, and accompanied by Calgary Economic Development representatives, and Mayor **Naheed Nenshi**. RocketSpace will employ all of ten people.

- Swoop, which is the discount air carrier announced as a new division of Calgary-based WestJet in September. It is expected to employ 50 people.

- Champion PetFoods' 400K-sq-ft kitchen facility in Parkland County that will produce high-end dry and freeze-dried dog and cat food. Edmonton-based Champion, which has also opened a facility in Kentucky, received \$3.5M from the Alberta gov't to help it build the new plant. About 200 people will be employed when it opens in 2019.

- DeepMind, a British artificial intelligence research

company owned by Google, is opening a small lab in Edmonton in collaboration with the UofA. Three professors will work part time there, with six additional researchers expected to be hired later.

- Cavendish Farms, owned by the Irving dynasty of New Brunswick, is building a \$360M frozen potato plant in Lethbridge that will replace its current facility and triple production to 415M lbs p.a. of french fries, etc. translating into 400 jobs and requiring its suppliers to increase their potato patches from 6,000 acres to 15,000 acres. The Alberta gov't is providing about \$13M in infrastructure to support this and other “value-added agri-food sector” industries in Lethbridge.

All in all, hardly a blue-chip invasion, although we do think that encouraging the “value-added agri-food” (VAAF?) sector is a sensible policy. As **Peter Lougheed** discovered in the 1970s when he promoted development of the then-fledgling oilsands, and as various deep-thinkers have concluded in the various treatises on diversification that have been produced over the decades: work with what you know.

Obviously oil and gas-related technologies remain paramount, and innovation in specific areas such as emission reduction, efficiency, and the increased utilization of cleaner and plentiful natural gas as an industrial and transportation fuel are all areas where industry is constantly innovating and evolving.

But agriculture, our second biggest industry, is something we've known longer than we've known oil, and our agricultural research and development facilities and schools have grown with the industry and are second to none. The agri-food and beverage manufacturing sectors have been steadily increasing in value and was worth \$14.6B last year, ahead of second-place chemical manufacturing (\$13.2B) and third place petroleum & coal manufacturing (\$12.7B).

Exports of value-added agri-food products have been increasing by 5% for the past three years and, with the recent coming into effect of the European Trade Agreement, exponential growth is in the offing.

Insight

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Insight is published 37-39 times annually by

DOLPHIN MEDIA INC.

PO Box 67012 Meadowlark Park

Edmonton, AB T5R 5Y3

ISSN 0849-567T

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Editor emeritus: Mark Lisac 2005-2013

Founding publisher: Rich Vivone, 1986-2005

Phone: 780.914.3425

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People ...

Appointments...

● **Milton Sussman**, 66, a veteran civil servant who held high-ranking positions in Manitoba's former NDP government and was most recently CEO of the 28,000-employee Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, as deputy minister of health, effective last Monday.



Sussman



Amrhein

Sussman replaces **Carl Amrhein**, 58, the former UofA provost (chief operating officer) who was appointed Health DM in August of 2015, and resigned last month, almost three years short of his five-year-contract—amid some controversy. He has taken a position as provost and vice-president (academic) with the Karachi-based Aga Khan University, an independent research school, which has campuses and teaching hospitals in Pakistan, Africa, and Afghanistan. (We understand Carl will be based in Nairobi).

Amrhein's resignation came after a series of CBC stories by **Charles Rusnell** and **Jennie Russell** appeared, alleging that Amrhein was in conflict of interest when he was the administrator of Alberta Health Services—a position he held between his provost and DM posts. Several unnamed sources in Alberta Health and AHS told the reporters that Amrhein had lobbied AHS to provide funding for Pure North S'Energy, an alternative medicine foundation started by the wealthy Calgary oilman and philanthropist **Allan Markin**, 72, co-founder of Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. (CNRL) and a co-owner of the Calgary Flames.

Markin's foundation advocates mega-doses of Vitamin D as a cure for various ailments—a practice discredited by many mainstream medical scientists, and determined by Alberta Health to lack empirical bona fides. But according to the CBC's sources, Amrhein, a former geography professor, was a Pure North believer, and had, along with his wife, participated in the program.

In October of 2016, after becoming DM of Health, Amrhein signed off on a \$4.2M grant to Pure North to administer its program at a primary-care clinic in Calgary serving the indigent and addicted and staffed by nurse practitioners.

Ethics Commissioner **Marguerite Trussler**, whom Amrhein had informed of his participation in the Pure North program upon becoming deputy minister, told the reporters that the decision to fund the Calgary clinic was "made elsewhere." Amrhein had told her he had signed off on the grant after Health Minister **Sarah Hoffman** had already approved it. (Hoffman refused comment on the matter.)

The funding was later discontinued. At a Public Accounts Committee meeting in early September, then Wildrose Health critic **Tany Yao** (Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo) was unable to get straight answers from Amrhein or from assistant deputy minister **Andre Tremblay** (to whom Amrhein deferred) on why exactly the grant was awarded and then withdrawn. Shortly afterwards, Amrhein resigned.

The CBC and the two reporters are being sued for defamation by Pure North, which is seeking \$6M in damages.

Sussman will likely be a less controversial deputy minister. Prior to his 21-month run as CEO of the Winnipeg Health Authority, he had served in Manitoba's NDP government from 1999 to 2015, with stints as deputy minister of health, clerk of executive council, cabinet secretary, and deputy minister of Family Services and Housing.

A former senior executive in the Alberta Health system

who had dealings with Sussman when he was the DM of Health in Manitoba, describes him as "a very, very good man: practical, understated, and effective."

She also thinks it will help that Sussman is "thrilled to be here," whereas Amrhein, although competent, always carried a degree of resentment from when he was UofA provost and, although being on the short list, was twice passed over as president, first with the hiring of **Indira Samarasekera** in 2004, then by **David Turpin** in 2014. His new job as provost of a prestigious international university will, she believes, be a far better fit.

● **Katherine Camarta**, a former senior legal counsel with TransAlta in Calgary, and **Denis Filipovic** a project execution manager with Gibsons Energy, as public members to the council of the College of Naturopathic Doctors of Alberta, each for a three-year term.

● **Janet Blayone**, a Peace River artist, writer, and practitioner of the "Art of Hosting" (a New Age collective intelligence process), to a list of public members for the purpose of establishing complaint review committees and hearing tribunals of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists for a three-year term.

● **Helen A. Rice**, past president of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and a long-serving Grande Prairie councillor, **Lawrence (Larry) B. Staples**, an Edmonton civil engineer, and **Albert J. Schuld**, a Sherwood Park management consultant, as public members to the council of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists, each for a three-year term. Rice has also been appointed to a list of public members for the purpose of establishing complaint review committees and hearing tribunals of the College of Alberta Professional Foresters and the College of Alberta Professional Forest Technologists for a three-year term.

● **Abisola (Abby) Adesanya**, a Calgary lawyer and contracts advisor with SAIT, **Marilyn Hooper**, a retired executive assistant with the City of Edmonton and former outreach coordinator for the NDP Opposition (1998-2004), and **Jack A. Jones**, a project manager for a Calgary pipeline company, as members to the council of the College of Alberta Professional Foresters, each for a three-year term.

● **Krishnanunni Nair Anil (Anil Nair)**, a Calgary-based logistics manager with an international freight company, as a public member to the council of the College of Alberta Professional Forest Technologists for a three-year term.

Honours...

● **Muriel Stanley Venne**, 80, a Métis activist and Aboriginal rights proponent, has been honoured by the becoming the first person of Indigenous descent to have a provincial building named for her. The Muriel Stanley Venne Provincial Centre, a multi-purpose building in Edmonton, currently under renovation, was named this week at a ceremony officiated by Premier **Rachel Notley**, accompanied by the newly appointed Infrastructure Minister **Sandra Jansen**, and attended by Stanley Venne and members of her extended family. Born in Lamont, Venne was appointed by Premier **Peter Lougheed** to the newly created Alberta Human Rights Commission in 1973, and since then has been involved in various organizations advancing Aboriginal rights and economic development. She was founder and president of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, served on the Board of Directors of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, and is a lifetime member of the Canadian Native Friendship Centre. Her awards include the Order of Canada, the Queen's Medal, the Alberta Gov't Centennial Medal, and the National Aboriginal Achievement Award.

Talk in the Corridors

Mixed messages for the federal Tories...

● Monday's two federal byelections held both good and bad news for the Conservative Party of Canada.

Predictably, the good news came from Sturgeon River-Parkland, the exurban riding west of Edmonton vacated by **Rona Ambrose**, the former cabinet minister and interim party leader, following the election of leader **Andrew Scheer** on May 27 (*Insight*, June 2).

Dane Lloyd, a 26-year-old parliamentary adviser to St. Albert MP **Michael Cooper** and an officer in the Canadian Army reserve, romped to an easy victory. The electorate—or at least the 24% of the eligible voters who bothered casting a ballot—was apparently unconcerned by Lloyd's politically incorrect Facebook postings that included use of the term “feminazi,” or his attempt (at age 18) to form a local branch of the National Rifle Association.

He received 77% of the vote. Liberal candidate **Brian Gold**, despite a visit by Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** to his campaign headquarters, only managed 12%, followed by NDPer **Shawna Gawreluk** with 8%.

The bad news for the Tories came from the northeastern rural Québec riding of Lac-Saint-Jean, a seat they had held since **Denis Lebel** defeated the Bloc candidate in 2007. Lebel became Prime Minister **Stephen Harper**'s Québec lieutenant and held several cabinet positions. In opposition he'd run for interim leader, but was beaten by Ambrose who appointed him deputy leader. Lebel, 63, opted to leave politics in June, forcing last Monday's byelection.

In what was seen as a major victory, Liberal candidate **Richard Hébert**, a local former mayor, grabbed 39% of the vote, beating CPC candidate **Rémy Leclerc** (25%) and the Bloc's **Marc Maltais** (23%).

This was the first win by the Liberals in Lac-Saint-Jean since 1980 and was viewed by some an indictment of Scheer's leadership.

The results also raised concerns about the appeal of new NDP Leader **Jagmeet Singh** in Québec. NDP candidate **Gisèle Dallaire** dropped from just over 28% and second place in 2015 to a fourth place showing of just 11.7% on Monday.

Unions preparing for the UCPocalypse...

● A certain trepidation is being felt by big labour about Alberta's political future—specifically the possibility that the UCP could defeat NDP in the 2019 election. At the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees' convention last week, one of the brothers running for vice president told the 800 or so gathered at Edmonton's Shaw Convention Centre that it was important that AUPE locals currently negotiating contracts with the gov't—locals representing roughly 75% of the 93,000 provincial employees—be “aggressive” in their demands in case the Conservatives are elected and institute wage freezes.

And speaking to almost a thousand at the United Nurses of Alberta convention in Edmonton this week, Alberta Federation of Labour president **Gil McGowan** warned his audience to prepare themselves for the “avalanche of bullshit to subvert democracy” that can be expected from the right in the “silly season” of electioneering lies ahead in the next 18 months.

In particular McGowan warned the nurses to be on their guard against the expected Conservative push for austerity, “because austerity does not end recessions, it

makes them worse.”

He said the AFL will be starting its own campaign to counteract the anticipated UCP campaign to undo all the good things that the NDP, guided by its friends in labour, has accomplished, things that include the increased minimum wage and the new employment standards and labour codes. He unofficially dubbed the campaign the “no-bullshit campaign.”

The week ahead ...

Oct. 30—Fall sitting of the Legislature begins at 1:30 pm. According to House Leader and Transportation Minister **Brian Mason** it will be a busy session with 15 bills scheduled to be introduced, beginning with an act to prevent gas-and-dash incidents that have resulted in two deaths in the last two years when gas station workers attempted to stop the dashers. This act will likely mimic BC's legislation requiring prepayment or pay at the pump. There will also be legislation that prohibits teachers at all types of schools from telling parents that their kids have joined gay-straight alliances (or “outing” kids, as the NDP likes to put it), no doubt designed to draw out the Kenney-led UCP—now comprising a 27-member opposition—which advocates for parental rights. (There could be some kind of constitutional challenge to such a bill, but we'll see.) There is also a consumer protection bill designed to protect against “fraud, scams, and misleading high pressure sales tactics.” The new riding boundaries recommended by the Electoral Boundaries Commission (*Insight* Oct. 21) will be written into legislation. There will be a bill regulating the use and sale of cannabis (and we don't expect the legislation will call for gov't-run pot stores), and a separate bill will amend the *Traffic Safety Act* to enable enforcement of cannabis-impaired driving regulations. The fall sitting is scheduled to run until Dec. 7. Also watch for new dynamics among the independents. NDP defector **Karen McPherson**, for example, is expected to join Alberta Party sole member and leader **Greg Clark**. Other independents may follow. To catch the live-stream, go to: <http://assemblyonline.assembly.ab.ca/Harmony/ContentEntityDetailView.aspx?contententityid=6331&date=20171025>

Oct. 30—Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention meets in the Federal Bldg, 9 am to noon; to watch the live-streaming go to: <https://livestream.com/fmav/cipanel>

Oct. 30—Economic & Trade Minister **Deron Bilous**, freshly back from his European trade mission, hosts a \$250-a-head wine-and-cheese fundraiser at Calgary's Barcelona Tavern, 501 8 Ave. SW, 4 pm; tickets at <http://www.albertandp.ca/bilousyyc>

Nov. 4—An opportunity to throw back a few cold ones with Premier **Rachel Notley** at her \$200-a-head “Oktoberfest in November!” fundraiser at Bonnie Doon Hall, 9240 93 St., Edmonton, 7 pm; tickets at: <http://www.albertandp.ca/oktoberfest2017>

Nov. 4—That other leadership contest—to replace **Janet Keeping** at the helm of the Green Party of Alberta—takes place at the party's AGM in Red Deer. There are, believe it or not, five candidates vying for the job: **Romy Tittel**, **James Friesen**, **Brian Deheer**, **Marco Reid**, & **Grant Neufeld**. The AGM is being held at the Baymont Inn & Suites, 311 49 Ave. and runs from 9 am to 4 pm. For more info on the candidates and their ideas about raising the party's profile from its current position (somewhere in the nether land between redundancy and irrelevance), go to: <http://greenpartyofalberta.ca/about/>

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