

From Zero to Hero: Now Starting Again from Zero:

John Turner and the Liberal Party's Future

SEAN RILEY

The Right Honorable John Napier Turner fought the good fight in the 1988 election campaign; no-one can deny that. He single-handedly turned the campaign around by making Free Trade the main issue. Indeed, the Liberals might even have won had the voters gone to the polls in the fourth or fifth week of the campaign, but so much for what might have been. In retrospect, it is clear as to why the Liberals lost.

In the last two weeks, the Conservatives and the business community successfully blitzed the media enough to cause great confusion in the electorate. For their part, the Liberals failed in that they just were not organized enough to control the focus of the media on the issue they wanted. Furthermore, in the final stretch, they failed to present Canadians with an alternative option to the Tories' Free Trade Agreement. Specifically, what was their plan? How would the Liberals pursue negotiations for changes to the agreement? The average Canadian was not receiving the message, not with all the extreme rhetoric flying from all sides; the primary impression of late-breaking ads being that both Mulroney and Turner were liars.

As well, the Turner Liberals failed to consolidate support in Quebec, their most traditional stronghold. Besides the fact that Mulroney nurtured his native son advantage to the hilt, there was the fact that many Trudeau Liberals were still split over support for Meech Lake - an accord that went against the most fundamental principles of all Liberal governments past. Because of this and longtime dissent over Turner's leadership in general, federalist Liberals in Quebec clearly did not give their best effort. Trudeau could have helped. Perhaps he was just waiting to be persuaded. Likewise, Turner could have swallowed his pride and appealed to Trudeau, Chretien, and the many others to do what they could for at least the sake of the party or even the country, if not for the leader. On the other side of the coin, so-called Liberal Premier Bourassa sure did all he could to support the Tories.

Instead, in the end, it was Turner saying: "J'ai pas des debts." He asked for no favours. He did it all himself and owed no debts. Instead, perhaps it should have been the entire Liberal Party saying "we pulled out all the stops. We did all we could."

If one lesson has been learned by the liberals in the aftermath of this election, it is that when the stakes are so high "we do less than we ought unless we do all that we can."

As for the future of the Liberal Party, perhaps they would be wise to heed the advice once given to me by a political science professor. "The first thing we learn to do in the infancy is to bury the dead and move on."

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ADVICE AND SUPPORT

By ALICE PITRE

You may think you don't know any gays, or that none of your friends are gay. But the fact is, one in every ten people is homosexual. And, rumour has it that on a per capita basis, Fredericton holds second place after San Francisco for the number of gay residents.

I have been told that life for a gay is not much different than it is for the rest of us. But I've also been told that gays can be legally evicted from their apartments or fired from their jobs just because of who they love. They are called names, beaten up, discriminated against, feared, even hated.

But homosexuals are not what most people think they are. Gay men do not look any different than other men. They are not hairdressers. Neither do they want to dress like or be a woman. They are not bad guys, woman haters, or child seducers. And they don't have insatiable sexual appetites.

To gays, the word "homosexual" is offensive. Just because of those three letters

stuck in the middle, the word implies that the only thing gays think about is sex. But sex is not the reason people fall in love, no matter who they fall in love with.

Being gay is not a choice. With all the discrimination against them, who would actually decide to be homosexual? There is only one choice for them - to be celibate or not. The feelings don't change.

One big problem for gays is isolation. They are leading two lives - their private homosexual self, and another public self put on for the heterosexual world. Coming out can be difficult.

But who is there to talk to when you are afraid your family will desert you, or your friends turn on you. And where do you find someone who understands how you feel? Another gay person can help you work through the fears. Others who have experienced "coming out" can testify that most friends care, and most parents come around in the end. But it is still scary.

In Fredericton, there is no support group to lend an ear to hurting, angry, or lonely gays.

A bar, like Dance Trax on Westmorland near Queen, is not really a good place to talk. But it is a place where you can dance with the people you want to dance with. No need to pretend. And the music, I hear, is great, not to mention the air-conditioning in summer.

FLAG, Fredericton's Lesbians and Gay Men, offers advice and support through the Gay Line - 457-2156. The line is open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 to 10 pm. The AIDS Hotline - 1-800-561-4009 - is available Monday and Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 10:30.

There are other resources on campus. The Harriet Irving Library has shelves of books on homosexuality. Grace Getty of the Nursing Faculty is very open and willing to talk. And then there is the Counselling Centre.

The Counselling Centre is always ready to provide resources. They are not going to tell you how to run your life. They are there to listen. Call Fred Horsley at 453-4820. Privacy and confidentiality are guaranteed.



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