

Stockwell Day defends Alliance

Day's stance on same-sex marriage challenged

by Sean Patrick Sullivan

Stockwell Day defended his party's stance on same-sex marriages Saturday, criticizing Prime Minister Jean Chretien for allegedly coercing his cabinet into voting against the Canadian Alliance.

Day said the Prime Minister's stance on same-sex marriage is tearing the Liberal party apart.

"The Prime Minister ordered his MPs: 'You will vote this way and I don't care what you believe in,'" Day told the crowd of 150, referring to the Alliance's motion last week to reaffirm the traditional definition of marriage. "It was not a free vote."

Speaking at an Alliance BBQ in Fredericton, Day deftly dodged a discussion on same-sex marriages, instead focusing on gun registration, foreign affairs, military spending, the beef industry, and pedophilia laws.

Protesters also took aim at Day for his failure to support Bill C-250, a bill passed last week that will expand the definition of "identifiable groups" in the Criminal Code's hate

propaganda law to include persons targeted because of sexual orientation.

They held signs denouncing Day's stance on same-sex marriage, and passed out leaflets outlining his voting record on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues.

Greg Daborn was one of about a dozen protesters on hand to greet Day.

"You talk about people being beaten in foreign countries; what about Matthew Shepard, and the fact that he was beaten to death in his own country?" asked Daborn. "There's a website that celebrates that beating, and you won't support a law to prevent that website from happening in Canada."

Shepard, a 21-year-old gay man, was brutally beaten to death in Colorado five years ago.

Day said he would support such a law, but that Bill C-250 was flawed.

"If that website exists, those guys should be slam-dunked; they should be hit with the law. It's atrocious that they can celebrate this," said Day, adding that the legislation needs to be reworked.

Though the bill was amended to exclude "an opinion based on a belief

in a religious text," Day said the exemption doesn't go far enough.

In a letter to the *Globe and Mail* last week, Svend Robinson, a gay MP from Burnaby, BC, who first raised the issue in 1981, assured readers that the bill protects religion freedom.

"Bill C-250 is a step forward for all those who believe that promotion of hatred and violence based on sexual orientation, which according to police evidence is all too common, is just as unacceptable as that based on race, religion, colour, or ethnic origin," he wrote.



Andrea Markey/The Brunswickan
Day presented with record of LGBTQ voting statistics.

Fredericton to become 56th Canadian MADD chapter



Carole Morris/The Brunswickan

Susan MacAskill (left) and Pam Earle (right) discuss the new MADD chapter in Fredericton.

New Brunswick receives D+, ranking 10th place in Canada

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her story about why she joined.

"Drunk driving is a problem anywhere," MacAskill said. "[MADD Canada's] mission statement is to stop impaired driving and to support victims of this violent crime."

Drunk driving has affected MacAskill and her family several times since the 1980s. She realized she had to do something to try to prevent drinking and driving when her father was killed by a drunk driver.

"Prior to 2000, MADD typically began in an area where there had been a crash or a loss of life and people in the community said, 'we don't want this to happen anymore'... so they'd contact MADD and ask how they could start [a chapter]," explained MacAskill.

MacAskill is impressed with Earle's pro-active approach.

"The reality of it is that drinking and driving can affect anyone," said MacAskill. "There is no guarantee for anyone if they've been consuming [alcohol] and they get behind the wheel of a vehicle that they're going

to get home safely, and plus, there is no guarantee for a sober individual."

Her advice is always plan ahead. Have money for cab fare or for bus transportation or have a designated driver. Taking turns within a group of friends to be the designated driver is a responsible option that she hopes university students will embrace.

Bridget Beswick, another law student, signed on to be one of the first volunteers for the Fredericton MADD chapter.

"I think it's something that affects people our age significantly," said Beswick. "I didn't think the organization would apply to me but... it applies to anyone who might be affected by drunk drivers or by the fall-out of their actions, [it's not just for parents]."

According to MacAskill, between four and five people die and approximately 200 are injured daily in Canada because of alcohol related incidents on Canadian highways.

MacAskill believe establishing a MADD chapter in the city to be very beneficial.

"It is going to change some things," said MacAskill. "It's a good day for Fredericton."

Fredericton's official launch is intended for November, when it will become the 56th place to embrace MADD Canada's message.

The MADD organization, mainly compiled of concerned citizens and volunteers, stretches across Canada, having at least one chapter in every province except Prince Edward Island.

New Brunswick has four other chapters that have been developed; St. John, Moncton, Sussex and Grand Mannan.

"There is a large geographical area that is wide-open to develop our organization in so we're happy to be starting some work in Fredericton," said MacAskill.

Currently, New Brunswick does not have alcohol interlock, vehicle impoundment or vehicle forfeiture programs.

MADD is working on introducing such legislature in Atlantic Canada to make repeat offenders use ignition interlock before operating a motor vehicle.

"Our approach is to recommend to our governments that a person who has been charged three or more times, there should be appropriate sentencing for them and that they be required to have a device called ignition interlock installed on the steering mechanism of their vehicle," explained MacAskill.

The convicted driver would be required to provide a breath sample before the car would start. The device has been used in the United States for approximately 20 years and it's legislated for use in Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec. As of August 1st, Newfoundland adopted the same legislation.

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