

Whispers of McKenna

STEVE SMITH
THE BRUNSWICKAN

There's an impending vacancy at the head of the Liberal Party of Canada, and many party members are suggesting that a UNB alumnus is the man to fill it. Former Premier Frank McKenna is being touted as a possible candidate by a variety of senior Liberals, including Business New Brunswick minister Greg Byrne, Premier Shawn Graham, and assorted MPs and party officials speaking to the national media on condition of anonymity.

Local Liberals are no less enthusiastic. Greg Forsythe, who served as constituency association president until earlier this year and remained neutral in the 2006 contest, says of McKenna, "If he runs, I'll be there supporting him."

Current president Dan Foster isn't committed to any candidate and cautions that McKenna hasn't given any indication that he'll run, but allows that if he did "he'd be fairly popular" in Fredericton.

McKenna was Premier of N.B. from 1987 until 1997, winning all 58 of the legislature's seats in his inaugural campaign. While he never repeated the feat, he enjoyed

huge majorities for his entire time in office, during which he became known for his aggressive job creation strategy. He later served as Canadian ambassador to New Brunswick, and is currently the Deputy Chairman of the Toronto Dominion Bank.

In fact, according to UNB political scientist Donald Wright, McKenna's success after politics may mitigate against his running.

"He won't run because he's doing far too well in the private sector," Wright says.

The man behind one of the internet's most popular Liberal blogs agrees.

"I don't think he'll run," says Dan Arnold, who blogs under the name Calgary Grit. Arnold believes that if McKenna was interested in leading the Liberals, he would have run after Paul Martin's 2006 resignation. "Last time the race was his for the taking. The prize looked a little bit better then and he was a little bit younger then." In support of his argument, Arnold points to media speculation surrounding a possible McKenna bid before each of the 1990, 2004, and 2006 races; each time, McKenna decided against running.

Two of the leading contenders in the 2006 race, Bob Rae and Michael Ignatieff, are expected to run again, though Wright

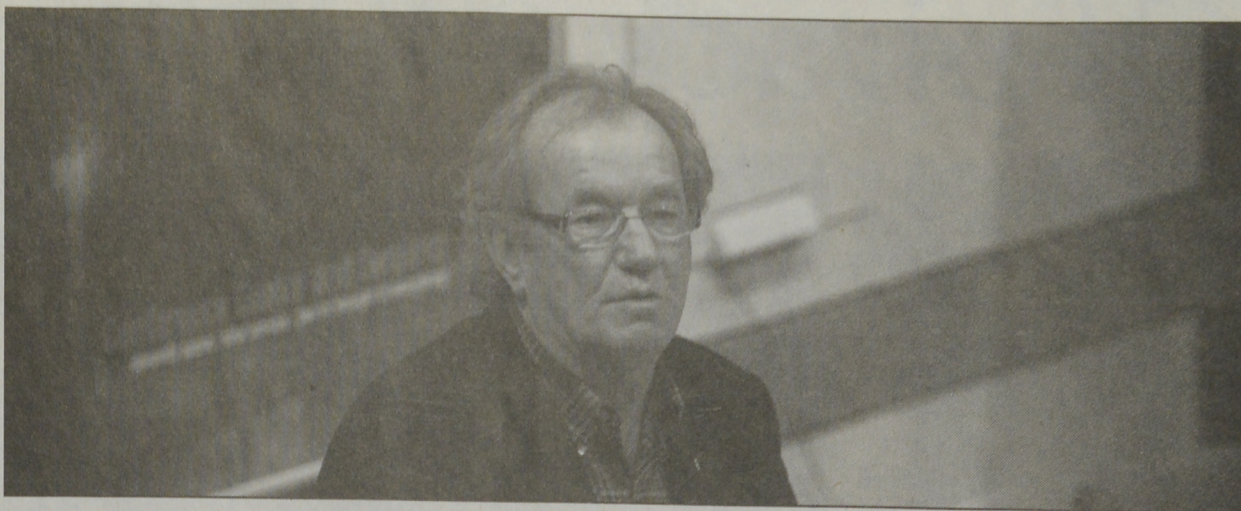
doesn't believe that either is the right choice.

"The Liberal establishment is looking for a quick winner, but the party needs to think longer-term and look beyond the next election," he says, adding that barring a Conservative "implosion," a victory in the next election is likely beyond the Liberals' grasp. He also suggests that McKenna might not be the only potential leadership candidate to come out of New Brunswick.

"Dominic LeBlanc might be the long-term answer the party needs to rebrand itself, the person to rebuild the party over the next six or seven years." LeBlanc has been the Member of Parliament for Beauséjour since 2000, and is the son of former Governor General Roméo LeBlanc. At 40, he's more than 20 years younger than Rae and McKenna, who are both 60, and 61-year-old Ignatieff. Foster is reluctant to say anything unequivocal about a LeBlanc candidacy but agrees that "he's certainly got support in Fredericton."

Stéphane Dion announced on Oct. 20 that he would be resigning from the Liberal leadership position, after leading the party to its lowest share of the electoral vote since 1867. He will remain as leader until May 2009, when party members will select his replacement at a delegate convention in Vancouver.

What's the Buzz all about?



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickan

Buzz Hargrove, above, spoke at UNB last week about the economy and government.

CAMERON MITCHELL
THE BRUNSWICKAN

There was an eclectic mix of people at Buzz Hargrove's guest lecture last Wednesday, Oct. 22. There were business people in suits, politicians with rimless glasses, students in sweatshirts, and UNB staff dressed mainly in brown. But none of them knew what to expect from the former leader of the Canadian Auto Workers Union, who stepped down a mere month ago.

Hargrove entered the room dressed like an office worker on casual Friday, but the reception didn't match his look, and he was greeted like a rock star. People fought to shake Hargrove's hand and cameras flashed relentlessly.

Hargrove brushed off his shirt, thanked everyone for being there, and said a special thank-you to the lady who handed him a Tim Horton's coffee. Then he started to talk, and his voice took over the room.

"My brand of unionism is called social unionism," Hargrove bellowed. "Social unionism means you're part of a broader movement, you're not just the union ... it means you want to play a role in the communities you live in."

Everybody knows what a strike and unions are, but as Hargrove explained, "the day-to-day work of the labour unions are not well known." Hargrove described how it was important for his unions to be involved in charities. He talked about everything from shelters for

drug-addicted teens, to a massive movement to bring fresh well water to impoverished Native groups in the Yukon. "These are the sorts of things that got me out of bed in the morning," he said.

Hargrove has spent a lifetime fighting for better wages and working conditions.

"It's aptly critical that we do the job in collective bargaining, and not be afraid to take on a battle," Hargrove continued. "But we should also be constantly trying to find a creative solution and try to avoid a major fight ... anyone can have a strike."

Hargrove has received a lot of criticism for thinking outside the box. His political dealings have left him with enemies in the Conservative, Liberal, and NDP parties. Originally a proponent of the NDP, Hargrove switched sides and urged voters to vote Liberal in the 2006 election because he thought they had the best chance of defeating the Conservatives. Hargrove believes that Harper focuses too much on the west, and that "his principles don't sit well with the rest of Canada."

The United States is already in a recession because of their financial crisis, and Hargrove talked about how Canada isn't that far behind. "I can't imagine a more challenging situation for Canada," Hargrove continued, "we've only started to see the impact on workers."

Hargrove stressed how the government must work to ensure that Canadian workers get some help. He criticized the fact that 10 per cent of the \$700 billion bailout in the U.S. went towards bonuses for executives of bankrupt companies, and hinted

that the Harper government is well on its way to making similar mistakes. "We must fight for jobs! We can't accept that the mistakes of others are somehow our fault," Hargrove said.

Because of the economic crisis, companies like John Deere and Volvo are moving their production plants out of Canada and down to Mexico. Hargrove talked about how he believes that the government and labour unions must work together to ensure that those sorts of things don't happen.

However, the worst may be yet to come. "There is a good chance that one of Ford, Chrysler, or GM will go out of business in the next couple of weeks," Hargrove said. The trickle-down effect of that sort of occurrence would hurt countless Canadians, and put many people out of work.

However, Hargrove believes that there is light at the end of tunnel. "I've spent my life time being an optimist, and I'm not about to stop," he said. According to Hargrove, these dire times should signal the government to put money back into social programs, and to create jobs. "There will be tremendous pressure on social programs in the next while," Hargrove continued, "and now's not the time to say there's no money."

"What's happening in our economy is not normal, but we can do something about it, and the labour movement can take the lead," Hargrove urged. "We need a real debate on what's important to our country and our people."

Hargrove, a New Brunswick native, was bestowed an honorary degree from UNB at Thursday's convocation.

The push for Transition

SARAH RATCHFORD
THE BRUNSWICKAN

For 16 years, UNB's Neville/Jones house has been the driving force behind the Bed Push, an annual event which generates funds in support of Women in Transition House (WITH).

WITH is a safe, confidential haven for abused women and their children. It is staffed by women who are trained to provide support, and to be responsive to the needs of women in crisis.

WITH's mission statement says that it "provides refuge and comfort and a time for healing" and that its success "is achieved through clients who leave to lead happier and healthier lives

through self-improvement thereby providing hope for the future."

The funds raised by the men of Neville/Jones will be put towards providing food and other essentials to residents of the shelter, as well as "general maintenance, utilities, food, ensuring that everything is up to date and that the women have a comfortable environment," says Erica Gorman, President of the shelter's Board of Directors. Donations also go to such necessities as bedding.

"I think the Bed Push is a really great fundraiser. These men work so hard for us," says Gorman. Altogether, the event has raised over \$200,000 for WITH.

The event raised \$16,000 this year.

"Forty per cent of our operating money comes from donations, and the Neville/Jones bed push is a big one," Gorman says appreciatively.

Event coordinator Evan Scott says the event is "just a bunch of guys trying to do a great thing for

the community."

"We're not tolerating abuse against women," he says.

Monies raised from the Bed Push have assisted Transition House in providing shelter and support to abused women and children for the past 16 years. Each year, over 300 women and children seek refuge at the Transition House.

The shelter is for any woman, with or without children, who has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused. It provides emotional support and peer counseling, information on legal remedies, income assistance, employment, housing, day care, job training programs and other resources, including referrals for counseling.

Erica Gorman, on behalf of Transition House, says, "Thank you to everybody for your hard work and support, especially Nick and his team. Your support is greatly appreciated."

Student graduating into an economic slowdown

JOE KORNELSEN
THE UNITER

WINNIPEG (CUP) - The economic cycle is moving into a recession, which spells trouble for students about to graduate.

"We are seeing a short-term slowdown in a long-term growth pattern," said Hugh Grant, a professor of economics at the University of Winnipeg who specializes in labour economics.

Grant says the time when a student enters the labour market can have an impact on their long-term earnings.

"Enter a bad labour market - and here I mean a prolonged recession - you may get a job, but a lousy job," he said. "When the labour market improves five years later and jobs open

up in your field, you find yourself competing with fresh graduates."

According to Grant, studies show that this "economic scarring" can be reflected in a worker's wages throughout their life.

Russell Plett remembers well the recession in the '80s. He was shingling roofs in the early years of the decade and remembers the difficulty finding work.

"We didn't get to shop for jobs," he said. "I don't know that I ever turned a job down."

By 1983, Plett decided he would rather be in school than face the elements on rooftops throughout the seasons. He graduated with a degree in education in 1988 and began teaching in northern Manitoba.

Today he spends his days writing.

"Keep your human capital up to date," said Plett. "It's about keeping your education credentials fresh."

Economies naturally cycle through periods of growth and decline. Decline happens when an economy shows two consecutive quarters of negative growth.

Some recessions can be short and shallow like in 2001, or they can be much longer and deeper like in the early 1980s.

Stephanie Barke graduated from the University of Winnipeg last April with a bachelor of arts, and although she didn't find a job in her field, by June she was working with a company developing information and communications software.

Barke recently received an e-mail from the president of her company about the current financial trouble, saying that things will continue as normal, but that it's hard to predict the next six months.

"I'm not worried too much right now," she said. "[But] the phones aren't ringing off the hook like they were in July."

\$ 100,000

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